THE PERIOD OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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CHAPTER I

THE REVOLUTIONARY SETTLEMENT

THE general law that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, is as true in history as in dynamics. History is the story of the interplay of opposing tendencies. Broadly viewed, the evolution of a nation is even, continuous, irresistible like the flow of a great river. Considered more minutely, it is spasmodic and uncertain, moving now forward now backward, like the surf of sea breakers, advancing and retiring like the tide. That any actual advance is made in political development by a nation is due to the interposition of new forces, the effects of changing circumstances, and especially to the innate conservatism of human nature that unconsciously resists a change, even when that change represents a return from a freshly established system to an older once cherished.

Our period opened with a constitutional revolution which depressed the power of the Crown. In the middle, it saw George III attempt a policy that would have made the Crown all powerful. But he failed, and in the end the Reform Bill of 1832 marked a counter-revolution that carried Britain one stage further in its career towards democracy.

The revolution of 1688 was a protest against the claims of the monarchs of the Restoration to an unlimited pre-

rogative, which would have confiscated all the popular gains of past constitutional struggles. Charles II took care that his public actions were generally conciliatory; yet he was suspected of chafing at parliamentary control. But James II, by his emphatic advocacy of the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience, his extravagant pretensions to a suspending and dispensing power over the law, his flagrant attempts to subordinate justice to his private devices through subservient judges and a Court of High Commission long since condemned as unconstitutional, his appeal to the coercive effects of a standing army whose very existence in times of peace was illegal, threatened Britain with a *coup d'état* that would have set it under a royal absolutism as stringent as that in France under Louis XIV, and, what was worse, promised to force upon it the Catholic religion it disliked. It met attempted tyranny with rebellion, and called in the foreigner, William of Orange, as the champion of constitutional government and Protestantism. James's plans miscarried, and on 11th December 1688 he fled to France.

Thus, at the beginning of 1689, Britain was nominally without a government. To meet the crisis William could only call a Convention. In form and procedure it exactly resembled a parliament; it claimed parliamentary powers; and it eventually declared itself a parliament. In reality it was an illegal assembly, for it had not been summoned by the king, and although it made changes of the first magnitude in the constitution, its acts were technically irregular, and in law amounted to a revolution. The revolution was initiated by the dethronement of James, who was declared to have abdicated, and the enthronement of William and Mary. It was reinforced by certain measures passed by the Convention and succeeding parliaments, namely, the Bill of Rights and the Mutiny Act of 1689, the Triennial

Bill of 1694, and the Act of Settlement of 1701. It was perpetuated by various customs and conventions that gradually arose in the system of government and gave Britain a limited monarchy and an unwritten "customary" constitution.

When the Convention conferred the crown upon William and Mary, giving sole and full power to William, the nation asserted and exercised the right to change the order of succession, and disregard the hereditary principle in monarchy. The Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement went further. The one excluded Catholic heirs, the other reasserted the exclusion, and quite arbitrarily invested the crown in Anne, the younger daughter of James II, and, if her issue failed, in the remote line of the Electress Sophia of Hanover, the grand-daughter of James I. Ardent royalists might reverence the pure Stuart blood in Anne, and at the end of her reign wildly dream of a restoration of the old line and the old monarchical principles in the person of the Pretender. But with the accession of George I their cherished doctrine of divine right became mere heady, impracticable sentimentality, and the plain fact was that the king reigned by virtue of a statutory title and the grace of a loyal people.

Nor could the new monarchy pretend to inherit the vast claims of the old. A revised coronation oath bound the king to rule "according to the statutes in parliament agreed on." The Bill of Rights denounced the suspending and dispensing powers, and again condemned as illegal such irregular tribunals as James's Court of High Commission. The Crown had still a wide prerogative and an enormous indirect political influence through its wealth of patronage, but its direct constitutional power was weakened and parliament usurped its place.

Parliament emerged from the Revolution immensely strengthened. It had weathered the storms of Stuart

days. No longer was it to meet irregularly, to linger indefinitely, or terminate all too abruptly according to the king's caprice. The Bill of Rights declared that parliaments ought to be held frequently. The Triennial Bill limited the duration of any one parliament to three years. In the first year of William's reign a Mutiny Act was passed, granting special disciplinary powers to the army authorities. But since these powers were given for one year only, it was absolutely essential that parliament should assemble at least once every year to renew them. The same result followed from a new financial policy. Certain sums were allotted to the king for life for his private requirements. But for the general purposes of government money was voted for one year only, and since the Bill of Rights laid it down that the only taxes the king could legally collect were those granted by parliament, failure to summon parliament annually would inevitably involve a stoppage of supplies.

Thus parliament secured regular sessions and a continuous existence, and made itself indispensable to the king. It became the predominant factor in the constitution. It secured full control of finance; for not only did it authorise the collection of taxes, but also by what was known as "the appropriation of supplies," it controlled expenditure by defining the various purposes for which revenue might be spent, and the amount to be spent on each. It also diverted the control of the judges from the Crown to itself when the Act of Settlement provided that judges were no longer to receive their stipends from the king, but from the parliamentary grants. And it lost the last constitutional check upon it when the royal veto lapsed into desuetude. William and Anne were unwilling to precipitate political crises by frequently exercising their undoubted right to veto legislation; the first two Georges accepted Whig measures without dispute; and after it was used

by Anne, in 1707, the royal veto was never again resorted to.

The triumph of parliament really meant the triumph of the Commons. During William's reign they finally deprived the Lords of the power of altering money bills sent up from the Commons, and they thus monopolised the greatest instrument of power.

Later, when the Crown was in close alliance with the ministry, the Commons could surmount general obstruction on the part of the Lords, by threatening to create new peers. In 1719 an unsuccessful attempt was made to rob the Commons of this part of their coercive power by means of a Peerage Bill, which would have prescribed a definite and final limit to the numbers constituting the House of Lords. But Walpole managed to defeat it, and for a long time the Commons remained supreme.

The predominance of the Commons was by no means intolerable for the Lords. They were both recruited from the same class of landed proprietors, and on vital matters their interests were identical. Moreover, the Lords had a disproportionate share in choosing the Commons. It was asserted that two-thirds of the Commons were returned by Peers, and that two dukes nominated twenty members. The truth is that until the end of our period parliament did not even roughly represent the nation. Boroughs enfranchised in previous generations as leading towns had decayed, and had few or no constituents. Other places were deliberately elevated to be parliamentary boroughs by the Tudors, because their populations were small and under royal influence. Many boroughs formerly possessing a franchise more or less liberal were punished by Charles II for too zealously aiding the parliamentary cause by having their charters so revised that the franchise was monopolised by the corporation or freemen, or some other such close body. Many borough members were

simply nominated by the owners of the boroughs, as at Old Sarum, which belonged to the Pitts. It was possible for one to buy a rotten borough and elect oneself, as at Ludgershall. In most of the close boroughs landed influence and bribery decided the election. In only a few places like Westminster and Preston, and in the counties where the forty shilling freeholders had a vote, was there a semblance of the representative system. Except in moments of greater national excitement, when even borough mongers were carried away by the current of popular feeling, parliament was in no sense a "mirror of the people."

For those who approve of the main lines of development in British history this was not an unmixed evil. It was something to have a stable and detached governing body at a time when British political opinion at the best was fluid, when the country sometimes fluctuated violently between extreme opinions, and desperate men following desperate causes might have converted a peaceful revolution into an orgy of bloodshed and anarchy.

Meanwhile, independent as it was of the country, the Crown, and the Peers, the House of Commons had very great power. The monarch might possibly control it by working to prevent the formation of any predominant group within it, and by setting rival factions by the ears. But at the beginning of our period the dispute over the succession not only crippled the royal initiative, but drew a clear line of differentiation between Whigs and Tories, and promoted the growth of large and homogeneous parties too strong for the king to master. In a way, we might attribute the perfecting of the party system of government to the Revolution. With it arose Cabinet rule.

The origin of the Cabinet has been traced to the Cabal. It grew into prominence in the reign of William III. The

fact that parliament now transacted all important State business, and that the king was excluded from direct participation in politics, inclined him to keep in closer touch with those who controlled the situation in the two Houses. By those means he might mould the national policy according to his own desires.

So a small committee emerged, meeting in the king's cabinet, and generally confined to the chief ministers of state and the high officers in the royal service. It came to be called a cabinet. Yet it was long before it attained to the exclusiveness, homogeneity, authority, and responsibility of a modern cabinet. In its earliest stages it was by no means confined to the actual ministers of the government in parliament, and it was not composed solely of members of one party. For both William and Anne hesitated to entrust power to any single party, thinking that it constrained their own freedom of action. They attempted to select their ministers from both parties. The result could not but be confusion and weakness in the government, since Whig and Tory intrigued against one another.

Sunderland is said to have suggested to William the expedient of taking his cabinet from one party only. But the logic of events, and the growing efficiency and improved organisation of political parties soon gave the sovereign no choice in the matter. It became obvious that if a cabinet was to be stable and effective it must be formed solely of members of the party enjoying a majority in the Commons, irrespective of the sovereign's personal predilections.

Even then the cabinet had not of necessity a perfect cohesion and harmony. After George I and George II withdrew from cabinet meetings, and left them to the control of a minister of transcendent influence who became known as the prime minister, he was often saddled with colleagues distasteful to him. Walpole,

the political martinet of the eighteenth century, could only shape his cabinet to his liking by playing the consummate courtier and enslaving the royal confidence. A cabinet with a common policy, a common responsibility, and an acknowledged head in the prime minister, was a product of the following century.

But sufficient has been said to show that the seeds of our modern governmental system were sown during the revolution that gave the British crown to William and Mary. By its action in setting the Crown below the Law, in limiting the royal prerogative, in giving parliament an impregnable position in the constitution, it inaugurated a new political era. Nevertheless, as a revolution it was unique, so careful were its promoters to carry it through with a minimum of friction and a maximum of method, and it became an object of admiration for subsequent generations in all countries striving after constitutional government.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTION ON TRIAL

ALTHOUGH the revolution passed quietly in England and Wales, it caused some difficulty elsewhere. In Ireland it immediately aroused a frenzied war of religious bigotry, for ever associated in popular memory with the gallant stand of the Protestants at the siege of Londonderry, and of the Catholics at Limerick. But William's victory over James at the battle of the Boyne practically killed the Jacobite cause in Ireland.

In Scotland the Edinburgh Convention not only imitated the acts of its English model, but also prepared the way for the change of 1690, which made the Scottish church Presbyterian in doctrine and constitution. Here,

too, the defeat of the Highland clans, and the death of their brilliant leader, Dundee, at Killiecrankie, left the Jacobite cause prostrate.

But it was unfortunate that in both countries William's triumph was accompanied by acts fraught with terrible consequences in the future. For through a harsh Penal Code the conquered Irish Catholics were subjected to a social and political tyranny that ruined their country's happiness and prosperity, while in Scotland the severities of the government and William's negligence in allowing the Duke of Argyle to revenge an old tribal grudge by a massacre of the Macdonalds of Glencoe, fostered a latent resentment among the Highlanders that burst forth in the rebellions of 1715 and 1745.

To combat French hostility to the Revolution was doubtless more to William's taste than suppressing domestic rebellions. He had made it his life's work to destroy French ascendency, which he regarded as a menace to Europe in general, and to Dutch and Protestant interests in particular. It was partly to detach Britain from her French alliance and enlist her resources on his own side, that he had consented to embark upon the adventure that made him king, and Louis XIV played into his hands by declaring for James II against the Revolution. In 1689 Britain was at war with France, as a member of a coalition that included Holland, Brandenburg, Spain, and the Empire. In William she found a tenacious and circumspect diplomatist, and a general whose unfailing coolness, courage, and spirit of self-sacrifice compensated for any deficiency in his military genius. In the field he was unfortunate, and the war, which lasted eight years, had more of disaster than glory for his subjects. He suffered a long succession of checks, and lost important towns to the French. The French even beat the British at sea; and although Russell's victory at La Hogue (1692) gave reparation,

British merchants eternally complained of the depredations of French privateers. But the king's indomitable spirit enabled him to prolong the contest until France was literally exhausted, and Louis was glad to make the peace of Ryswick (1697), which among other things stripped him of all his conquests made from Holland and Britain since 1678, and compelled him to accept the British Revolution by formally recognising William as king.

Meanwhile, William found his position at home full of vexations. From the first he was exposed to all the British prejudice against the foreigner, a prejudice aggravated by his fondness for Dutch troops and his extravagant favours to Dutch favourites. He had to recognise that he owed his position not to his own virtues but to his predecessor's errors, and that he retained it rather because he was politically necessary than personally loved. His wars had but little in them to fire the popular imagination, and Britain suspected that in them she was being exploited in the interests of Holland.

His own personality repelled. By nature he was proud, self-centred, and difficult of access. His strenuous life seemed to have sapped all his humanity. Constitutionally weak, he often failed to conceal an invalid's peevishness and irascibility. His foreign training, his limited imagination, his very tolerance and sound sense made him particularly unsuited to play a successful part in British domestic affairs. For instance, his Comprehension Bill (1689), designed so to broaden the basis of the Church as to allow Dissenters to re-enter it with the smallest sacrifice of opinion, showed how hopelessly he had misread the religious situation. He failed to realise that differences of Church and Dissent symbolised an estrangement perpetuated by bitterest memories of mutual persecution and alternate triumph and defeat in things temporal. His Bill was rejected by Churchman

and Dissenter alike, and the only relief he could obtain for the latter was a Toleration Act, which gave him freedom of worship without removing the civil disabilities of the Clarendon Code. Indeed, William had to watch a fresh religious disturbance evoked and further forces rallied against the Revolution by a new Oath of Allegiance, which the Whigs arrogantly imposed upon the clergymen. Many High Churchmen who would have silently acquiesced in a reign their principles condemned, refused the oath, and were supplanted in their livings by more complaisant Low Churchmen and, known as Non-Jurors, they plunged deeply into the Jacobite intrigues of succeeding reigns.

In politics William wished to govern as well as rule. He was his own foreign minister, and he coveted an influence as direct and independent in home affairs. He used his veto against measures he disliked, no matter what party advocated them. He was not sufficiently casual and partisan to win the absolute support of any party by becoming its tool. So he found himself harassed by both.

The Whigs tried to keep him in tutelage, forced the Triennial Act down his throat, and annoyed him by their factiousness. The Tories railed against the French war and the expense it involved. To relieve the burdensome taxation and escape costly temporary loans, Montague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, initiated the National Debt (1693) by asking for permanent loans at a reasonable rate of interest, guaranteed by State credit—and the Tories denounced the Debt for generations. For the convenience of merchants and to obtain large loans expeditiously, Montague established the Bank of England (1694)—and the Tories unsuccessfully tried to wreck the scheme by organising a short-lived Land Bank. Another measure of Whig finance, the recalling of the old coinage depreciated by age and clip-

ping, was really a pressing necessity. But by causing a temporary monetary stringency and almost precipitating a commercial crisis, it gave the Tories one more occasion for a partisan outcry.

When the Tories came into power in 1698, they deliberately heaped humiliation on the king by reducing his army and particularly by dismissing his Dutch Guards. In 1700 they attacked his Dutch favourites, and only real friends, by a Resumption Act to make them disgorge the vast estates he had bestowed upon them; and in the Act of Settlement they inserted clauses directly reflecting upon him.

However, William lived down any real hopes that the revolutionary settlement would be overthrown in his lifetime. He steadily strengthened his claims upon the country. His very difficulties developed his political gifts, taught him to practise tact and compromise, and to support humiliation, insult, and defeat for the sake of ultimate success. His services to Britain were real. He saw the Revolution tided over and the Protestant succession assured. He made Britain's influence once more ascendant in the councils of Europe, and entrusted the balance of power to her guardianship. The financial reforms of his reign gave a new stimulus to British commerce. At the end of his days, when he was contemplating his last assault upon French ambition, he seemed at last to have reached the hearts of his subjects and roused their patriotic devotion.

The trouble arose over the question of the Spanish succession. Charles II long lay dying, and the succession was disputed between Louis XIV's grandson Philip, Joseph of Bavaria, and Charles, Archduke of Austria. To avoid recourse to arms and preserve the balance of power a secret arrangement was reached in two successive Partition treaties. In the second Charles of Austria was to succeed the King of Spain, and France was to be

compensated in Italy. But now the indignant Spaniards, getting wind of these attempts to settle their affairs over their heads, forced their king to make the French claimant his heir absolutely, and it was by accepting this heritage for his grandson Philip, that Louis made a European war inevitable.

Britain rallied enthusiastically to the war when it became known that Louis had promised the dying James to make his Catholic son, the Old Pretender, King of Britain. William's death at this supreme moment (1702) hardly affected the situation. The influence of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, pledged Queen Anne to the struggle, and Britain joined a Grand Alliance, which included Austria, Holland, Prussia, the lesser German States, and later Portugal and Savoy to fight the common enemy. Marlborough took the field in person as Captain-General of the forces in the Netherlands, and, by reducing the long line of fortresses along the Meuse, began a series of brilliant campaigns in which he never lost a battle nor failed in a siege. In 1704, hoodwinking the Dutch, who would have restrained him, he suddenly marched across South Germany, crushed the Bavarians at Donauworth, and joining forces with the Austrians, gained an overwhelming victory over the French at Blenheim.

This success had great effects. Abroad, it renewed the courage of the allies, and the prestige it gave Marlborough reinforced the diplomatic dexterity and grace of manner by which alone he had held the cumbersome Alliance together. At home, it replaced the Tories, who had factiously hindered the war, by Whigs pledged to a vigorous support of the general who had fired their warlike ardour and set Britain at the head of Europe. Britain triumphed with him in victory after victory, at Ramilles, Oudenarde, Lille, Malplaquet. In Spain, Peterborough opened a campaign as successful as it was

astonishing. Rooke and Cloudesley Shovel captured Gibraltar and held it against every desperate attempt to dislodge them. Minorca and Sardinia fell to Stanhope, Charles of Austria was crowned King at Madrid, and the Austrians drove the French from Italy.

As for Louis, with the tradition of his invincibility shattered, and his resources depleted by defeat, inept finance, famine, and the dislocation of industry that followed the flight of the Huguenots after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685), he was obviously beaten. Thrice he asked for peace under the most humiliating conditions. Each time it was denied him by the greedy Austrians and the vindictive Dutch, backed up by the Whigs, who wished to prolong their power by prolonging a war now unnecessary. But Anne's reign was pre-eminently one of bubbling excitement and recurrent crises, and Louis was saved by drastic political changes in Britain.

The British were growing sick of the war and the ruination of trade. The increase in the Debt spelt bankruptcy to their timid minds, and Marlborough's ambition made them dread a military usurpation. And from military glory their attention had been attracted by the doings of the High Church clergy (now active and clamant under a queen who hardly concealed her religious prejudices) who lashed the country into a fanatical fury with an outcry that the Church was endangered by the treachery of the Whigs.

Plausibility was given to their assertions by the Act of Union with Presbyterian Scotland (1707) and the influx of Huguenots. To an excited populace it became a reality when the Whigs injudiciously impeached Sacheverell, a London rector and the noisiest of the agitators. The prosecution gave him the publicity of martyrdom, and the country was swept with enthusiasm for "High Church and Sacheverell." It gave the Tories a crushing

majority in parliament, which they retained to the end of the reign.

The triumph of the Tories in 1710 was a real menace to the Revolution. The High Church sentiments that had captivated the country were the absolute negation of the principles of the revolutionary settlement. The party in power had the will to undo all that had been done since 1688. While the strong national feeling engendered by successful wars and the rule of a native princess had sapped enthusiasm for the German who would succeed Anne by the Act of Settlement, the passage of time had softened popular resentment against the Stuarts. The queen was but a weak woman at the mercy of intriguing favourites, and she wavered between family affection and loyalty to her coronation oath. Had the Tory leaders only shaped their policy for the public good, had the Pretender been less sincerely Catholic, there is no knowing what new direction the Tories might have given to British politics. They might at least have effected a second Stuart restoration.

But Oxford and Bolingbroke were partisans, and in the three years that they were negotiating the peace of Utrecht (1713) that ended the war they lost the country's confidence. They behaved "more like conspirators than negotiators," and their methods cast a slur upon Britain's reputation for honest dealing. Marlborough, who, with all his faults of rapacity and time-serving, had done valiantly for his countrymen, they dismissed with every circumstance of contumely. They gave away war secrets and betrayed the allies in secret traffickings with Louis.

True, the peace they forced upon Europe readjusted the European balance. For with France at the last gasp, Spain could safely be given to the French claimant, while Austria got vast grants of Spanish territory in Italy and the Spanish Netherlands. The peace also

gave Britain a further impetus upon her career as a world power by adding to her possessions Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the Hudson Bay, Gibraltar, and Minorca, and her commercial interests were served by the so-called Asiento Treaty, which gave her the profitable monopoly of the slave trade with the Spanish-American colonies, with permission to send one ship a year to join in the valuable South American trade. Britain had gained as much as William III could ever have hoped for.

But alas for those who make terms after a successful war! The peace of Utrecht caused profound dissatisfaction in Britain, because it was thought she could have gained much more. In vain Bolingbroke strove to rally the country once again by vindictive legislation against the Dissenters, by the Occasional Conformity Act (1711), to disqualify those who attended a Dissenting Chapel from holding public office, and by the Schism Act (1714), to prevent Dissenters from holding schools and acting as teachers. The queen's health was precarious; the succession of George of Hanover seemed imminent; and George was known to favour the Whigs, who would one day bring the authors of the peace to account. Bolingbroke must restore the Pretender, or at the worst so balance the chances of success between him and George that the latter would be driven to make terms.

It was a dangerous game, but ruin was the only alternative. He got rid of the sluggish Oxford, entered into feverish negotiations with James to persuade him to abandon Catholicism, and filled the high positions in the services with Jacobites. And in the middle of it all the queen died (30th July 1714). The game was up, and with the accession of George I the last practicable assault upon the Revolution had failed.

CHAPTER III

THE WHIG SUPREMACY

GEORGE I was Elector of Hanover. In speech, habits, and outlook he was entirely German. He never learnt English, and England only concerned him in so far as it gave him a handsome revenue, titles, and pensions for his foreign favourites, and support for the ambitious part he wished Hanover to play in Continental politics. His son and successor was more of an Englishman, but resembled him in essentials. Their reigns, in their foreign character and their tendency to subordinate British interests to those of a continental appanage, recalled that of William III.

But unlike William, the Georges abandoned their royal powers and neglected the practical work of government. It was this, coupled with the fact that the Whigs enjoyed uninterrupted supremacy through the two reigns, that made it inevitable that the constitution should develop further in accordance with the underlying principles of the Revolution.

The first two Georges set the precedent of a kingship that was a ceremonial rather than a working headship of government. They allowed their Whig ministers to administer the country as they liked; they absented themselves from cabinet meetings, and left their places to be filled by a prime minister; and they never once used their veto. Mixed ministries had broken down amidst the fierce faction fights of the reigns of William and Anne. They now became impossible in the face of a parliament continuously and predominantly Whig.

The reasons for the Whig supremacy are easy to explain. The Jacobite plots hatched in France discredited

the Tories in the eyes of their countrymen as unpatriotic allies of France and Catholicism. Tory intrigues against George coupled with a Jacobite rebellion (1715), drove the king to throw himself unreservedly upon the support of the Whigs. The High Church clergy had spent their strength in the disorders of Anne's reign. Low Churchmen again usurped their places and upheld the Whigs. In parliament a mere handful of Tories remained, and they were divided between a Jacobite group and one that disliked the Catholicism of the Pretender and acquiesced in the Hanoverian succession.

Moreover, a complaisant king gave the Whigs a monopoly of the royal patronage, which enabled them to attract the aristocratic boroughmongers to their side, to control the elections in the country, and win the divisions in the Commons. They set themselves to give no excuse for public resentment, to wean Britain from its Jacobite tendencies, to reconcile it to its foreign dynasty, and so to guarantee their own triumph. Accordingly they adopted a cautious, temporising policy, refrained from ambitious and provocative legislation, and soothed the country with practical administrative reforms. They preserved the supremacy of the State Church, but retained the allegiance of the Dissenters by repealing the Schism Act and the Occasional Conformity Act, and by passing an annual Indemnity Act to relieve them of their worst disabilities.

Thus, by their statesmanlike ability, the Whigs won the country's confidence. They gave Britain a brilliant succession of great parliamentarians, clever debaters, like Fox, consummate orators like Pulteney, skilful financiers like Walpole, famous war ministers like Pitt. While their opponents alienated the commercial classes by attacking the national debt, in which so much British capital was invested, the Whigs entrenched themselves behind economical government and a peaceful foreign

policy. Consequently the great industrial centres, even Jacobite Manchester, remained loyal to the Whigs during the Jacobite rebellions.

A Jacobite invasion (1715) under the old Pretender failed, leaving as a memorial the Riot Act (1715), and the Septennial Act (1716) which prolonged the duration of parliament to seven years. The Whigs found they had now more to fear from personal rivalries and divergent policies within their own ranks than from anything else. Their disagreements generally turned upon questions of peace and war.

Trouble threatened from two quarters. Firstly, Spain had recovered marvellously under the vigorous rule of her Italian minister Alberoni, and her ambitious queen, Elizabeth Farnese, wished to regain the Italian territory taken away by the peace of Utrecht. Secondly, the Swedish Empire was disintegrating, and, by seizing Bremen and Verden, George mixed himself in the quarrels that arose among the northern powers who were dividing the spoil.

The Spanish question was settled temporarily when Byng destroyed the Spanish Armada off Cape Passaro (1718). But when Stanhope used Britain's military resources and diplomatic influence to help Hanover in the northern complications, Townshend and Walpole joined in the popular cry that Britain was "being steered by the Hanoverian rudder." It only needed the famous financial catastrophe of 1720 to put the peace party in power.

A South Sea Company had been formed by Oxford to exploit the Asiento clauses of the peace of Utrecht. Its profits were so great that it eventually aspired to increase its capital by persuading holders of government annuities to exchange them for South Sea stock. It was also a Whig device to reduce both interest and principal of the Debt. So an impression was fostered that the

scheme would enormously benefit the company, and the directors flourished before the nation a rash offer both to pay off the Debt and leave a surplus of seven and a half million pounds. The result was a general epidemic of speculation, which was turned to account by unscrupulous adventurers to float many incredibly silly concerns, to which all ranks and conditions greedily subscribed. The speedy collapse of the wildest projects turned the craze into a financial panic. South Sea stock fell from £1000 to £135; ruination was widespread; and the ministry fell before public indignation.

In spite of the dramatic interest of the South Sea Bubble, it chiefly claims our attention because it was the means of raising a famous man to power. Robert Walpole, who already enjoyed a reputation as an expert in public finance, was unanimously called upon with his cousin, Lord Townshend, to help the distracted nation. And he dominated British politics for another twenty years.

He was a fat ugly man, of inelegant manners and vicious morals, but brave, good-humoured, easy of access, and not without power to charm. Aristocratic in outlook, boisterous in behaviour, coarse in his amusements, commonplace in his tastes, high-spirited and jovial, a devoted sportsman, he was yet the adroit courtier. In the party fight he was cool, shrewd, practical, unscrupulous. He suspected enthusiasm and derided disinterestedness, and his rule was a by-word for its corruption. Inordinately jealous of power, his masterful temper made him the first real prime minister parliament had seen. But it caused him to drive the ablest of his colleagues, including his cousin Townshend, from the cabinet, and to refuse promotion to the rising young Whigs, the "Boys" as he insolently called them. Together, they formed a war party and baited him till he fell.

He had abounding ability. He was a ready debater and a lucid exponent of finance. Apart from party management he was honest and truly patriotic. In foreign politics he was all for peace, perhaps less from humanitarianism than from prudential motives. To him war was expensive and unfruitful. He tried hard to curb the martial spirit of George II, to soothe the animosities of Britain and Spain, and to maintain a cordial understanding with France.

In domestic politics his caution, his limited imagination, his utter lack of ideals made his rule one of stagnation, broken only by a few attempted fiscal reforms. His strength lay in finance. He was the first to use the expedient of a Sinking Fund to lessen the Debt. His economy allowed him to reduce the land taxes from four shillings to one, and so blunted the hostility of the gentry towards the Whigs. By his famous Excise Scheme (1733) he hoped to be able to abolish the land taxes altogether.

This scheme was of a twofold nature. It proposed to convert customs duties on tobacco and wine into excise duties, and so diminish smuggling and increase the revenue. It also provided for the erection of bonded warehouses at London, where goods from foreign countries could lie duty free awaiting transhipment in British vessels. Walpole thought that the scheme would stimulate British shipping, and benefit the trade of London by making it a great international distributing centre. However, its true nature was obscured by all the misrepresentation that private interest, political faction, and popular ignorance can produce. Instead of commanding admiration it caused such a clamour that Walpole abandoned it.

More successfully he strove to eradicate the relics of the cruder forms of Mercantilism by abolishing many useless export and import duties. With fine foresight he declared that the prosperity of the British colonies

must eventually benefit the homeland, and he relaxed the Navigation Laws in their favour. The result of his schemes was that his admirers could point to the great expansion of British trade during his government as a personal triumph against the attacks of his enemies.

George I had died in 1727. George II hated Walpole, "the fat pig," as he called him to Queen Caroline. But Walpole could find money for a gay monarch, and he was soon in favour again. A fresh attack of war fever in Britain brought his downfall.

The Spanish queen still hankered after an Italian estate for her son, Don Carlos. In 1725 she allied herself with the Austrian Emperor, and desultory fighting actually occurred between Britain and Spain before the treaty of Seville (1729) brought peace again. In the war of the Polish Succession Elizabeth Farnese at length obtained her heart's desire when Don Carlos became King of Naples.

But no readjustment of European boundaries could reconcile Britain and Spain. The real trouble lay far away in the Spanish colonies, where British commerce, expanding and aggressive, poached on the closed preserves of the Spanish merchants. As the two countries became more hostile to one another, the Spanish customs officers grew increasingly severe in punishing illicit trading, and Britain soon rang with complaints of their alleged tyranny. Captain Jenkins, who pretended that his ear had been cut off by the Spaniards and sent as an insulting present to Britain, was the hero of the hour, and vengeance was loudly demanded.

Circumstances were against Walpole. Spain was defiant. At home the crowd of able men he had driven into opposition joined with the Tories to fan the flames of war. Rather than relinquish the power he loved too well, he acquiesced in a war he knew to be unnecessary, and to conduct which he lacked the genius. He gained

no respite. His half-hearted measures and the incapacity of his officers brought failure and shame to Britain, and in 1742 he was forced to retire.

It is remarkable how little the downfall of a great minister affected the Whig supremacy. The brilliant and idle Whig "Patriot" Cartaret succeeded Walpole, but shut out the Tories. After two years he "went away laughing," and the Whigs were stronger than ever under Henry Pelham. For though Pelham was essentially commonplace and timid, so that his ten years of power were even more barren of legislation than Walpole's, he re-united the Whig forces by finding places for all Whigs, including the "Boys," in his Broad Bottomed Administration.

In the meantime the war of Jenkins' Ear had become merged in a general European war. In 1740 Charles VI, Emperor of Austria, died, leaving his unwieldy empire to his daughter, Maria Theresa. At once Frederick II of Prussia, with callous and despicable meanness, gave the signal for a general onslaught upon the Austrian dominions by seizing Silesia. Saxony, Bavaria, Spain, and France joined in the spoliation. Britain had to protect Hanover and her general European interests, and supported Maria Theresa, and when George II himself led the attack that routed the French at Dettingen, Britain found that to her war with Spain she had added war with France, and that she was exposed to the customary French weapon against her, a Jacobite revolt.

The Jacobite rising of 1745 was more formidable, but no more successful than that of 1715. A generation had arisen in Britain in whose ears Jacobite sentiments were a mere echo. The Scots now appreciated the value of the Union. Under the guidance of Bolingbroke, returned from exile, the Tories had put aside their Stuart sympathies; and the financial stability of Britain was now

inextricably bound up in the ruling dynasty. Even in the Highlands Bonnie Prince Charlie was received with consternation instead of enthusiasm. But he captured Edinburgh, and defeated the royal troops at Prestonpans, and so mastered Scotland. Invading England by way of Carlisle, he reached Derby. Then strong hostile forces closed upon him, steadily hounded him north, and crushed him at Culloden (1746). The Jacobite cause was lost for ever. Soon the Highlanders were to enlist their loyalty and unrivalled fighting powers in the wider British cause, when Pitt enrolled them in the royal army.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) put an end to fighting in Europe, though Prussia retained Silesia. France and Britain gained nothing from the war, and mutually restoring conquests, they were nominally at peace again. Actually, in America and India they were deciding by arms which was to be the first colonising power in the world.

At first the advantage in this remarkable contest lay with France. Her policy was definite and aggressive. In India Dupleix, the Governor of Pondicherry, carried it beyond the limits of mere trading ambitions, aimed at the complete expulsion of the British from their factories, and, aided by the chronic anarchy following the collapse of the Mogul Empire, sought to anticipate the dreams of Napoleon, and create in India a great French empire.

The British traders had been hard pressed by sea and land during the war of the Austrian Succession, and the peace brought them no relief. For Dupleix increased his forces by employing large numbers of Indian sepoys under his command, and again threatened the British. But a general and administrator of great energy and ambition appeared in the field in the person of the young English clerk, Robert Clive. By beating the French at Arcot (1751) he abruptly terminated their success, and

began a career during which he made Britain absolutely supreme in India.

In America a formal peace between the home governments counted for as little as in India. Here, while the unenterprising British colonists clung to the eastern seaboard, French traders, missionaries, and officials in Canada and Louisiana pushed along the river courses, saw the great natural resources of the interior of the continent, and hoped to claim the whole for France. Along the Mississippi, the Ohio, and the St. Lawrence they erected a chain of forts that would at once prevent all future expansion of the British colonies, and at the same time expose them to a French attack during a war. The British tried to break the chain. But jealous, parsimonious, quarrelling among themselves and with the home government, they were severely checked in 1754 and 1755, when Washington and Braddock respectively failed to take Fort Duquesne, and their prospects were gloomy indeed when fighting began again in Europe, and the disastrous course of the Seven Years' War forced Britain to leave them to their own devices for a time.

Maria Theresa meant to regain what she had lost at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and thirsted for revenge against Frederick of Prussia. By 1756 she had built up a coalition against Prussia, which included France, Russia, Sweden, and Saxony, and plunged Europe into the Seven Years' War. All the old problems—the safety of Hanover, the rivalry of France, British trading interests in the Netherlands, the larger question of the international balance—drove Britain to side with Prussia. But in 1754 Henry Pelham had died, and the outbreak of the war saw Britain distracted by partisan quarrels among those who wished to succeed him as prime minister. The remnant of the faction of Walpole and Pelham, under the latter's brother, the Duke of Newcastle, fought for office against the "Boys" under Pitt.

Newcastle had the king's favour, and he spent a large fortune in building up a powerful connection in parliament. But he was fawning, hypocritical, and timid, morbidly sensitive to criticism, and wanting even in the pedestrian merits of his brother. He could not support the burden of government much less conduct a great war. After three years he gave way to his rival. Pitt was full of ambition, but was detested by the king. His unique oratorical gifts, his sincere if ostentatious patriotism, his energy, broad sympathies, and firm grasp of principle marked him out for power. But although he was popular in the country he had no support in parliament. In a year he was out of office again.

Meanwhile the domestic struggle had paralysed British energies in the larger contest. Disasters on the Continent followed one another in quick succession. Frederick was beaten to his knees by force of numbers. Minorca was captured by the French, while a British fleet under Byng stood by inactive. A British army designed to operate in the Netherlands, under the Duke of Cumberland, was driven to capitulate at Kloster Zeven. In America the French took the forts of Ontario and Oswego. In India Surajah-Dowlah seized Calcutta, and shamefully tortured his prisoners in the "Black Hole." Worst of all was the spirit of caution and cowardice prevailing amongst the officers of the British forces, which prevented them from attempting anything daring or heroic, and caused them to shirk every crisis. The nation was plunged into a humiliation and despair only too apparent in the writings of the time.

Yet during this miserable period Britain was without a regular ministry for three months. Never had the defects of the Whig rule, partisan rancour, selfish intrigue, and aristocratic exclusiveness discovered themselves more alarmingly to the nation. It required the utmost address of common friends to eliminate purely personal differ-

ences, and reconcile George, Newcastle, and Pitt, and give the country the political stability so necessary in the presence of a war marked by great catastrophes and demanding great public sacrifices. But when this was achieved the issue was so happy and glorious for Britain that the sordid preliminaries were forgotten.

Pitt could now apply himself to the conduct of the war. He was forced to modify some of his principles and eat many of his words. But he gained the king's confidence, and the spell of his manner and the success of his policy fortified him against the taunts of his enemies. To his task of rehabilitating Britain's tattered glory he brought the influence of his magic personality and the fruits of military experience and keen study of warfare. His enthusiasm was infectious. His brave words pulsated through the nation and awakened its courage. His belief in Britain, its resources, its greatness, its honourable past and its glorious destiny, fired its imagination and roused it from its gloom to the greatest sacrifices, even to wage war simultaneously in four continents. With his mind resolutely intent upon his task, he disregarded the claims of seniority and social influence in appointing his commanders, favouring ability and promise; and he was repaid by a loyalty and daring in vivid contrast with the timidity hitherto prevailing in the forces.

In planning his campaigns, by prescience or chance, he made full use of Britain's growing naval supremacy. He left the continental campaign in the capable hands of Frederick, provided him with liberal supplies of money to maintain the struggle, repudiated the humiliating surrender of Kloster Zeven, and at Frederick's recommendation put the reinforced British army under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. The Prussian King's outspoken gratitude, a long run of Prussian successes in the field, the gallantry of the British infantry at Minden, where they beat off the French cavalry "without even

doing them the honour of forming square," were ample repayment for him, and he could turn to make a profitable fight elsewhere.

It was by sea that he harassed the French most severely. His expeditions against isolated French ports were costly. But they freed Britain from fear of invasion, and diverted the attention and resources of France from the war in Germany and America. More efficacious, perhaps, was the close blockade he gradually organised around the French coast. The enemy's squadrons at Brest and Toulon could not unite. In 1759 Boscawen destroyed the former, and the latter was annihilated by Hawke in the daring onslaught he made upon it in Quiberon Bay despite a raging gale and a rock-bound shore to leeward.

By these means Pitt was enabled to concentrate upon the most risky of the schemes he attempted, that conquest of vast territories overseas in America and India, which became the main object of his war policy, and which gives him so conspicuous a place in British colonial history.

In both India and America the French were the enemy. In the former, if Pitt could not claim to have inspired Clive's victories, he could at least boast that he was the first to recognise his genius and give him adequate support. And while a fleet beat off French reinforcements by sea, Clive secured Bengal, by driving the French from Chandernagore in 1757, and beating the Nawab at Plassey. Despite the efforts of the brave Lally, his success was uninterrupted, and in 1760 Eyre Coote finished his work by overthrowing Lally at Wandewash and capturing the last French station at Pondicherry. French influence had been uprooted in India.

Pitt had a larger share in the conquest of Canada. In 1758 he completed a comprehensive plan to break the cordon of French forts and subjugate all America.

Columns were sent against Fort Duquesne of evil memory, and against the forts of the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain, while a fleet blockaded Louisburg. Eventually they were all to concentrate on Quebec. The first and last expeditions succeeded, but Abercrombie blundered at Ticonderoga, and it was impossible to carry out the second part of the plan until the following year. Then, while Amherst reduced the forts of Lake Champlain and the upper reaches of the St. Lawrence, Wolfe, a resourceful young soldier discovered by Pitt, conducted an expedition full of exciting incidents against Quebec, which ended in his victory and death at the battle of the Heights of Abraham and the surrender of Quebec. Montreal surrendered in the next year, and French influence was soon as extinct in America as in India.

Pitt's fame was at its zenith. Even though his policy was much of a gamble, he had planned it with care. He made it possible by reason of the wonderful blockade of the French coast he maintained under Hawke, which left the French forces in America isolated and unsupported, while British forces and supplies had security of access. The successful result was a sufficient answer to those who pointed to the uncertainty of campaigns extending over wide areas and relying for their effect upon the concert and uniform success of columns too far separated to keep in touch with one another.

The year 1759 was known as "the great year." Every wind bore news of victory; from Hopson in the West Indies, from Clive in Bengal, from Boscawen at Toulon, from Ferdinand at Minden, from Amherst in America, from Hawke in Quiberon Bay. National amazement and rejoicing were prolonged into 1760 with the news of Wandewash and Montreal. The Whigs had justified themselves, and Pitt was an object of veneration.

But, had they known it, they had both run their course, soon to sink

with oriental rapidity. On 25th October 1760 George II suddenly died, and his successor was a youth who thought it more important that he should have his own way than that the nation should make conquests, and he had determined to end the war, the ministry, and the Whig supremacy.

CHAPTER IV

THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

(1) *The Religious Revivat*

PITT's success as a politician was largely due to the novelty of his methods. In the eyes of his fellow Whigs, the only public worth courting was the narrow circle controlling parliament, and in their best speeches they contented themselves with the restrained and dignified rhetoric suited to its patrician tastes. Pitt, however, dealt in an emotional, flamboyant, superheated eloquence calculated to range beyond the walls of the House of Commons, and make its appeal to the whole nation. Excitement and enthusiasm were his political instruments, and through them he gave Britain new ambitions and a glimpse of a new goal. Similar appeals and similar means employed by able preachers were simultaneously effecting changes as profound in the religious condition of the country.

In the early years of the eighteenth century the moral state of the country had sunk very low. Drunkenness, debauchery, excessive gambling were manly virtues, cultivated assiduously by the better classes. Popular sports brutalised the character, widespread ignorance degraded the impulses of the ordinary people. The universities were dens of idleness and license. The highest ministers of the king could flaunt their turpitude

in public, well knowing that the monarch himself was their model. And all the time the population was growing; places hitherto small and unimportant were becoming large and crowded industrial cities; workmen were herding together in slums that only encouraged evil; and there were few to protest.

To minister to the people under such conditions would have demanded all the resources of a vigilant and energetic church. Yet at this moment the religious forces of the nation were at their weakest. The lesser clergy were badly paid, despised, and forced to surrender to the lax worldly habits around them. The higher clergy appeared in the public eye as mere politicians neglecting their duties to curry favour with the powerful. There were not wanting pious, learned, devoted, or industrious clergymen. But their efforts as a body were crippled by intestine quarrels. High Churchmen were politically ruined by their Jacobite allegiances, and sulked and thwarted their Whig brethren of the Low Church. Both bodies quarrelled so violently that Convocation had to be suspended indefinitely.

Moreover, all religious sects were obsessed by the rationalist spirit of the age. Everywhere in Europe a steady reaction had set in against the narrow sectarianism of the past. In Britain the Established Church had beaten the Dissenters in the political struggle; and while the latter silently acquiesced in their fate, the former were quite satisfied with their triumph. The theological effervescence of the days of the Tudors and Stuarts resolved itself under the Hanoverians into a bland optimism that minimised the importance of creeds and dogmas, and insisted less upon religious zeal than upon moral conduct. Prominent men of religion approached Christianity as scholars, critics, and antiquarians. Prominent men of affairs were cynics like Chesterfield, downright unbelievers like Bolingbroke, or

made of religion a fashionable duty. Free thought prevailed everywhere. Religious enthusiasm became an offence against good manners. Worship was as formal and uninspired as politics. With an absence of a sense of spiritual duty, with no spark of missionary zeal among those whose task it should have been to promote the religious welfare of the community, the mass of the people were left to wallow in their own depravity, or work their own salvation.

Signs of a reaction appeared early in Wales in the work of Griffith Jones, a Carmarthenshire vicar, who organised itinerant teachers to go among the villages and hold their "circulating schools" to teach the people religion. But the great transformation in the religious condition of England was the result of the efforts of the Methodist revivalists. Chief of these were John Wesley, his brother Charles, and George Whitefield.

They had been the leaders in a society at Oxford which practised piety and religious devotion in their most ascetic forms, with prayer, fasting, Bible study, the visiting of the sick and the prisoners in the gaols. They lived a life so minutely regulated and conspicuously religious that they were nicknamed "Methodists." Many of them took holy orders, and tried to propagate in the country the religious zeal they had acquired at the University. John Wesley himself went out to minister to the colonists of Georgia.

But he proved himself hard, narrow, self-opinionated and exacting, and his enterprise was a dismal failure. It brought him, however, into contact with the Moravians, who gave his thoughts a new direction. He acquired a vivid conception of man's innate sinfulness, of the insufficiency of a mere blameless life to atone for it, of the perfect efficacy of faith in God as the only means of salvation; and being singularly credulous and superstitious, he believed that the person thus received

into a state of grace had a definite intimation of the fact and moment of his salvation through his personal feelings.

Wesley himself felt these premonitions of "conversion" at a religious meeting in 1738. His forceful and passionate nature was so profoundly stirred, and his missionary instincts so reinvigorated that he began the career of a wandering preacher, recking nothing of hardships and danger in his desire to stimulate the nation to share in his new enthusiasm. He soon gathered about him a band of helpers, as devoted and sincere if not as capable and cultured as himself, who carried his message to the most sequestered parts of the land, to the colonies, to India, to the British armies fighting on the continent.

The initial success of the religious revival that followed was largely due to the fact that it made its appeal directly to the mass of the nation; that it gave a new sense of importance to classes whose wants and feelings had been too often neglected and despised; and that the revivalists harangued their audiences in extempore addresses full of fire and emotion, far surer to attract popular attention than the dull compositions read by the regular clergy. It was here that George Whitefield rendered the movement signal service. John Wesley was a preacher of great power and eloquence. But Whitefield was at once a born orator and a consummate actor. His sermons could fascinate the phlegmatic Franklin and the fastidious Chesterfield, as well as plunge his humbler hearers into tears and terror, and they roused the same enthusiasm in religion as Pitt's speeches did in politics.

The tumult of prayer and ejaculation, the religious ecstasy, the excitement rising almost to frenzy, that followed Whitefield's addresses were typical of the revivalist meetings, and they quickly roused the hostility of the clergy. Whitefield and the Wesleys were clergy-

men themselves, but they were soon denied the use of the churches. Nor were the churches large enough to accommodate the vast congregations, sometimes numbered by the thousands, that crowded to hear them. The success of a meeting held in the open air for the sake of the Bristol colliers impelled Whitefield to begin a series of such meetings; Wesley reluctantly followed his example; and field preaching became a feature of the revival. It further alienated the clergy, and fresh innovations completed the separation of the Church and the Wesleyans. For in order to prevent the collapse that so often follows upon a movement born of excitement, and to obtain the help his fellow clergy refused him, Wesley was forced to ordain his own ministers to give the sacrament, to provide his converts with their own meeting-houses, and to elaborate a scheme of church services and activities.

The Wesleyans had to face much prejudice and suffer cruel treatment. Their tactless and tumultuous behaviour often alienated sympathisers. The strength of their movement was tried by quarrels among the leaders, and a section under Whitefield formed a separate body of Calvinistic Methodists, who found powerful support in Wales. Wesley was a loyal churchman, and although his energy, perseverance, and statesmanlike genius enabled him to make his Wesleyan Church a permanent factor in English religious life, he had to suffer the disappointment of seeing his people relegated to the ranks of the Nonconformists.

But the Methodist Revival had done great work. The religious indifference and neglect of the past generation eventually vanished. The Church itself was stimulated to fresh zeal by an Evangelical Movement resembling the Methodist Revival in means and methods. The Dissenting churches shared in the general awakening, and all helped to provide the means of worship in remote

country districts and the dark corners of the large cities previously left unserved.

It is true that religious activity had to be bought at the price of a recrudescence of sectarian bitterness, and that the great increase of the numbers outside the pale of the Established Church brought to life the old bigotry associated with the controversy respecting religious toleration. But on the other hand, by exhausting upon religion the excitement which France reserved for iconoclastic social doctrines, and by substituting religious dogma for the free thought which rapidly distracted French public opinion, Britain escaped the worst effects of the French Revolution, ultimately to glean the best.

(2) *The Industrial Changes*

The title "Industrial Revolution" has been taken as a general denomination of a period of political development. More particularly it has been applied to the great economic changes of the eighteenth century. The origin of those changes can be traced to the inventive genius and organising capacity of a few individuals. But they matured so rapidly, they produced such radical alterations in our economic system, and created so many new problems in politics and society, that they are justly regarded as in themselves constituting a revolution.

Like a political revolution, this economic revolution was only a logical outcome of preceding circumstances. From the days of the Tudors, British industrial prosperity had steadily increased. It had been stimulated by new crafts introduced by the cloth workers of the Netherlands fleeing to Britain from the tyranny of Alva, and by Huguenot silk and linen weavers, paper makers, clock makers, and glass and metal workers driven from France by the stern policy of Louis XIV. Minor in-

ventions, Lee's stocking frame (1589), a method for the mechanical shearing of cloth elaborated in the seventeenth century, Kay's flying shuttle (1733), and water driven machinery pirated from Italy for silk manufacture, all increased the output of goods. The new banking methods that came in with the Bank of England, and a great extension of the credit system during the seventeenth century, gave greater facility for the employment of spare capital in commerce.

Moreover, the political events of the eighteenth century undoubtedly fostered trade. At home, as we have seen, the Whigs carefully nursed the interests of the commercial classes. They kept taxation as low as possible; they were ever striving to lessen the charges of the Debt; they made their modest fiscal changes purely to serve trading convenience; and by their firm rule they saved commerce from the distracting effects of constant political turmoil.

Abroad, British trade was aided by the continual opening out of new markets. Thus diplomacy set itself to secure Britain valuable trading concessions in Europe, as in the Methuen Treaty with Portugal, and less successfully, in the treaty of Utrecht with France. At the same time, it endeavoured to cripple rivalry, as by fighting to keep the Scheldt closed to commerce, and by preventing the Austrian Emperor from developing the trade of Ostend.

Then the wars waged by Britain in the eighteenth century had as much a commercial as a political aim. They broke through the Spanish monopoly of trade with South America. They continually added to British markets and sources of raw material by bringing new colonies under our control in America, the Indies, India and Africa. And at the same time, as the British naval supremacy surely established itself, it afforded a security to our mercantile marine that other nations lacked, gave

confidence to British speculators in these far-distant fields, and enabled British regulated and joint-stock companies to organise and exploit their fresh opportunities without restraint.

Towns like Manchester and Glasgow were growing into populous centres of manufacture. The British merchant was asserting himself in politics. He might repay the economical rule of the Whigs by a steady support of the Hanoverian succession, but he was beginning to chafe at the restrictions of the old Mercantilist system that hindered his initiative and bolstered up old industries at the expense of new ones. The rationalistic ideas of Locke were beginning to permeate economic theory, and the individual tried to throw off the trammels of State control. And with the emancipation of the individual there came increasing competition and fresh impulses to trading activity.

The outstanding feature of eighteenth century history is thus the enormous expansion of British trade. But this demanded a production of manufactures on a correspondingly large scale. At first this could not be attained, because the conditions and instruments of manufacture were of too primitive a character. For instance, spinning and weaving in wool, cotton, and linen were performed in the homes of the operatives, who were scattered far and wide over the country-sides, whose machines were as simple as those of India, who depended for raw material upon travelling agents, and upon the local merchant for a market, and who divided their interests between their craft and their farms.

In the mining industry, the shafts were now so deep that profits were swallowed by working expenses, and many mines were hopelessly flooded. Charcoal was still the only satisfactory medium for extracting iron from ore. The dearness of coal was enhanced by the difficulties of transport over roads normally unfit for

heavy traffic, and smelting had to be done in the neighbourhood of the Kent and Sussex forests, which were rapidly being exhausted.

It was in the textile trades that the change from this state of things first showed itself. The cotton trade had cast off the restrictions of prohibitive taxation intending to protect the wool trade and the landed interest in sheep farming. But still two difficulties hindered it—the weavers could not get a sufficient supply of yarn because of the slow methods of spinning, and there was no thread produced strong enough to be used as warp, and linen warp had to be used instead.

Kay's flying shuttle for weaving only intensified the former difficulty. It was obviated by the inventions of two poor Lancashire men. In 1765 Hargreaves, a Blackburn man, perfected his "spinning jenny," which would spin many threads at the same time. In 1769 Richard Arkwright, "a plain, almost gross, bag-cheeked, pot-bellied Lancashire man," who began his career as a Bolton barber, patented a machine which performed all the operations of carding, roving, and spinning in one process.

These machines produced a strong coarse yarn which made excellent calico, and also superseded the linen warp, but which was unfit for fine work. It was another Bolton man, Samuel Crompton, a poor, shy, morose spinner, who, by combining and adding to the ideas of Hargreaves and Arkwright, invented in his "mule" the means of spinning delicate yarn rapidly. But now the balance between spinning and weaving had been reversed, and the weavers could not use the yarn rapidly enough for the spinners, until in 1785, Cartwright, a clergyman, invented the power loom driven by steam.

These men were typical of those who wrought the Industrial Revolution; mostly of humble status and exiguous resources, with no technical education, but

patient, persistent, and versatile. Their machinery was adapted to the woollen trade; they gave the signal for new discoveries in subsidiary branches, dyeing, bleaching, and printing; and they ensured British supremacy in textile manufacture. But they suffered the most violent opposition. Handworkers, fearing the loss of their livelihood, mobbed them, smashed their machines, and demolished their buildings. Masters, afraid of unequal competition, pirated their inventions and organised conspiracies to crush them under expensive litigation. Arkwright founded the calico trade and became a knight, triumphing over the direst vicissitudes. Cartwright enjoyed the succour of a parliamentary grant. Crompton founded the muslin trade, and died a misanthrope.

Yet their ultimate success depended largely upon the aid of inventors in another sphere. To effect the large scale production, which was the chief characteristic of the Industrial Revolution, their machinery required great driving power. Hand power, horse power, and water power were successively employed. Then in 1769 Watt, improving on an older model, adapted a steam-engine for pumping, hauling, and driving. He and his partner Boulton were nearly bankrupt before the engine was adopted widely, but it gave an incalculable impetus to the Industrial Revolution. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it had been applied to all textile machinery. Further, it revived mining by providing a cheap means of pumping and hauling, and so, just when improved methods had been discovered for working iron and steel, it gave the iron industry the benefit of cheap coal and a steam blast.

With the production of iron and coal on a large scale and their application to an increasing variety of manufactures, vast mining and metal industries grew up rivalling the textile trades in size and productivity. They resembled the textile trades inasmuch as they

were mostly associated with the enterprise of some individual. For example, in Stirlingshire the famous Carron Ironworks were founded by John Roebuck. Anthony Bacon opened the ironworks at Cyfarthfa, and impelled South Wales upon a career of prosperity that transformed the Vale of Glamorgan from the "Garden of Wales" to a swarming, smoke-blackened region of mining shafts and tall chimneys. At Wrexham and Coalbrookdale "Mad Iron" Wilkinson of Bersham was boring cannon for French and British artillery alike, building iron bridges and iron barges, drawing out iron piping for the new Paris water scheme, and defying the pains of Purgatory in an iron coffin.

On all hands British crafts old and new improved their technique and increased their output with a constant acceleration. The hardware trades of Sheffield and Birmingham wrought great transformations in the Midlands, and in the Potteries Josiah Wedgwood created a new industry when he discovered his famous cream "Queen" ware.

This great industrial expansion was mainly maintained because mechanical engineering was becoming an exact science capable of producing machines to meet every contingency, and constantly improving in accuracy of workmanship. Allied with civil engineering it supplied better facilities for travel and transport than the old conditions allowed.

By water, the engineering feats of the illiterate but eager Brindley in the construction of the canal from Worsley to Manchester in 1761 inaugurated a movement that gave the industrial districts a network of waterways for the carriage of their heavy wares and raw materials. In 1801 the first steam-driven vessel to navigate British waters, Symington's *Charlotte Dundas*, passed through the Forth and Clyde Canal. Conservatism and prejudice prevented the model from being adopted imme-

diately; but in 1813 Bell's *Comet* began regular sailings on the Clyde. By 1820 iron vessels were being built.

On land, roads were improved by the rapid extension of the turnpike system after 1745, and the stipulation in the Enclosure Acts for the building of public and private roads. But they were not really satisfactory until Metcalf and Telford propounded new methods of construction, and Macadam discovered a new method of preparing the surface to counteract the effects of usage and weathering that had turned the old roads into sloughs of despond.

Fast travelling over the new roads was organised by systems of stage coaches. But locally, for moving goods, trucks were made to travel on wooden tramways in the Tyne district. By 1776 cast-iron rails were being substituted, and in 1803 Trevithick had a locomotive to draw the waggons. It was Stephenson who adapted this system to passenger traffic. Devising his first engine in 1814, he was appointed engineer to the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1823. His engine, "The Rocket," travelled twenty-nine miles an hour in 1829, and in 1830, the conventional limit of the Industrial Revolution, the era of railway travelling for passengers dawned when the Duke of Wellington opened the Manchester and Liverpool Railway.

The revolution in industrial methods and transit gave a shattering blow to the lingering social and economic system of medieval Britain, with its stationary and rigid localism, its dispersed manufactures, its lack of specialisation, and its paternal regulation of trade and labour. It completed the transition to the conditions of modern times.

Industries were more and more inclined to concentrate about centres offering special economic advantages, either of labour, climate, fuel, or ease of access to raw material, markets, and trade routes. The old iron

industries of the south, the cloth making of the east and west, were left behind in the competition of the Midlands and the North.

The new travelling facilities gave mobility to labour, and it followed trade. Workers under the domestic system, labourers and small farmers, abandoned the country-side in great numbers to grasp at the opportunities that were bringing wealth to poor men, and, at first, good wages to all. While the aggregate population increased enormously, it crowded in ever increasing density about the great industrial towns. There, new class distinctions of capitalist and worker, employer and employed, and all their difficult attendant problems slowly emerged.

For capital, hitherto most closely associated with commerce, was capturing the field of industry, where expensive machinery and special buildings or factories demanded large expenditure. This in turn allowed of production on a large scale with all its accompanying economic advantages, and the domestic worker and small proprietor were crushed into the ranks of a new artisan class, working in large bodies in factories instead of in their own homes, living upon regular wages instead of the direct proceeds of the sale of their work, organised and supervised according to methods more and more elaborate, engaged upon tasks that became increasingly specialised with every improvement in machinery and method.

Britain was excited by the fortunes made by manufacturers, who could outbid lords in their wealth, and it had to pass through a sort of industrial frenzy that blinded all foresight and blunted all humanity. A mania for profit accompanied a mania for cheapness of production, and made men careless of all else. Children and women were pressed into service in the factories, and, in common with the men, worked under bad

conditions, except in the factories of a few leaders of the industrial movement, like Arkwright, who did give some attention to the cleanliness and the health and comfort of their workers.

Nor did the workers' misfortunes end with their labour. Their large towns, hastily thrown together with no regard to beauty or sanitation were frequently swept by epidemics of small-pox, cholera, and typhoid. No provision was made for any but brutal amusements, and vice and misery flourished together. The religious revivals came at an opportune moment, and did something to keep men from lapsing into mere barbarism. But education hardly existed for the mass of the labouring classes. In fact, Britain had been thrown into a revolution absolutely unpredicted and unprecedented; and it was not until the following century that its effects were truly appreciated and the proper remedies discussed.

(3) *The Agrarian Changes*

The great industrial changes of the century were coeval with agrarian changes no less striking, which vitally affected the economy and the distribution of the population of the country districts by a systematic enclosing of common lands.

Until the second half of the century the greater proportion of agricultural Britain still consisted of waste land, pasture, and arable land extended in huge common fields, cultivated according to the three field system of medieval agriculture. Affording food, fuel, the materials for clothing and housing, and, when combined with the practice of domestic manufacture, a certain honest independence and sufficient competence to the cultivators, the system of common farming answered well enough at a time when the locality had to be more or less self-sufficing.

But we have seen that a growing trade and an increasing population were radically changing the conditions of national life. There were men of rank and authority who insisted that agriculture must accommodate itself to these changes and secure a share of the general prosperity. They declared that the only way to do so was to make sweeping changes in the system of land tenure, to abolish the open field system, and enclose the common lands.

In fact, an era of innovation and experiment had set in for agriculture as well as manufacture, and farming experts were seeking to make their husbandry as scientific and remunerative as cotton spinning. Such men were Arthur Young, Lord Townshend, Francis, Fifth Duke of Bedford, "the handsome Englishman" Thomas Cooke Earl and Viscount Leicester of Holkham, Robert Bakewell, and others. Burke spent his leisure in studying farming, and George III's lively interest in the subject earned him the nickname of "Farmer George." The problem they set themselves was to improve the yield and range of crops, and maintain larger and better-bred herds of cattle. They succeeded by introducing new crops, especially artificial grasses. But their greatest discovery was the use of the turnip as a substitute for the wasteful fallow, because it not only prepared the light soils of a county like Norfolk for wheat—which it had been impossible to grow hitherto in certain districts—but, by affording an ample winter feed, it also allowed the farmer to maintain many more cattle than formerly, and gave him the very necessary manure for his land.

These progressive agriculturists urged the severest complaints against the prevailing system of open fields. It was too rigid. Since farming was carried out in common, the progressive farmer was penalised in so far as he could not employ new crops and new methods, but had to conform to the ideas of his more conservative

neighbours. It was impossible to obtain a good breed of animal and stamp out disease so long as all the animals mixed in the common pasture. The waste land, it is true, maintained the geese, goats, donkeys, and cows of many small cottagers, labourers, and poor people generally, and enabled them to live with the aid of a little domestic industry. But the waste was over-crowded and exhausted, and in many cases was good land capable of improvement. Altogether, it was maintained that the old system was wasteful and productive only of dissension, litigation, inefficiency, and poverty, and that its greatest fault was that it did not allow of the land being put to the uses it was best adapted for, especially in the neighbourhood of the growing towns, where there was a demand for dairy produce and vegetables.

The new prophets pointed out that only the farms on land already enclosed showed the marks of productive and scientific farming. They asserted that large farms were the only really profitable ones; that the farmers with the best chances of success were those with capital; and that capital would never be expended on land unless the farmer either owned his land or worked it privately. Their teachings, coupled with a growing perception of the possibilities of farming under the new system, and probably a desire to appropriate land under a patriotic pretext, produced an ever growing demand for enclosures.

This last phase of enclosure was effected in four ways. At first, enclosure was carried out by a common agreement among the people interested. But this method was attended with many practical disadvantages, and was too slow. Recourse was had to parliament, and enclosure by private acts of parliament began systematically in Anne's reign, and went on with increasing rapidity under the Georges. Complaints of delay and expense led to the passing of a General Enclosure Act in 1801, and then in 1845 enclosure was carried out with

the consent of a body of commissioners appointed by parliament for the purpose. There was a constant increase in the numbers of enclosures from the reign of George I until the decade following the American war, when there was a sudden drop. During the Napoleonic wars the increase began again, culminating in the years 1800–1810 when 906 enclosures were made. After 1820 the movement began to fail.

The beneficial effects of enclosure upon agriculture are now generally admitted, although it is argued that its best results were shown only upon light soils. Most of the results predicted by its advocates were attained, except that it failed to prevent Britain's growing population from becoming dependent upon foreign imports for its food.

But the movement has encountered a great deal of animadversion. The Enclosure Acts were rarely demanded by the ordinary farmers; the machinery for testing their sentiments were a sham; and often the Act was forced upon them against their declared wish. The lord of the manor and the impropriator of the tithes were nearly always the true moving spirits in seeking enclosure. Both in the passing of the Acts and in their application their interests were always secured, and parliamentary indifference and corruption not only tolerated chicanery, fraud, and greed in many of the larger interests, but with contemptuous insolence refused a hearing to the objections of the smaller men. Then the actual enclosure was carried out in a narrow legal spirit. The great numbers of squatters and cottagers, who lived on the margin of the common, had really no legal right to consideration in the division of land, and found their only means of living confiscated without their being able to protest. Many of the larger cultivators who ought to have been entitled to their holdings, were dispossessed because they could not furnish sufficient proof of their

claims. What was worse, there were instances of farmers, who had undoubted rights, being left out in the division because they could not comply with the complicated regulations of the law, either on account of their illiteracy or because they made their claims too late.

Nevertheless, it is asserted that, considering the difficulties of the task of apportioning such extensive tracts of land, the division was effected with an honest attempt at justice. The rights of the poor may have been overlooked in many cases, but the instances in which provision was made for allowing them the necessities of life were not few.

Many of the evils apparent in our landed system are directly attributed to the Enclosure Acts when enclosure was only a predisposing cause. Enclosure is said to have caused rural depopulation. But this was due largely to the attractions of good wages and steady employment in the industrial cities. Many men were given holdings that were too small to keep a family after the domestic industries were crushed out by machinery, and they sold out. Others had not the capital to enable them to stand the heavy cost of enclosure, and still others preferred to take advantage of the demand for land on the part of those enriched by the industrial revolution, who were anxious to buy land because of the social and political advantages attached to it. Moreover, national prosperity engendered expensive living, and improved means of communication broke down the simplicity of country habits, and in time even the small squire and the substantial yeoman, unable to keep pace with their class, preferred to sell their farms or estates. Then came the Napoleonic wars and high prices for the farmers. Their profits were great, but their extravagance was greater, and with the end of the wars and a return to lower prices, the weaker men were forced to sell their holdings or be ruined.

Thus the aggregation of large estates in the hands of a few individuals was due as much to the vicissitudes of agriculture, the large demand for land owing to industrial prosperity, and the triumph of the capitalist in farming, as to any unfair advantage the landowner may have taken of his monopoly of political power to defraud the poor man by enclosure. The great result of the agrarian revolution was similar to that of the industrial revolution, namely, to divide the agriculturalist community into two classes, the capitalist farmers and a landless class of labourers, who had once enjoyed but had now lost the position and freedom of proprietors.

(4) *A New Monarchy*

George III was a new type of Hanoverian king. Unlike his predecessors, he played the first part and his personal views were the determining factor in the politics of his reign. In private he was a kind, homely, simple gentleman, eminently respectable and pious, addicted to simple fare and simple amusements. As a monarch he was dignified yet condescending, active, patriotic, diligent, and brave. But he must be considered as a politician as well as a king.

For he was naturally assertive and self-opinionated; his mother had early filled his mind with a sense of his own importance; and he was determined to rule as well as to reign. He was unsuited for the task. He was dull, uneducated, and prone to insanity. Utterly selfish, he easily forgot past services, never tolerated opposition, nor honoured independence. He distrusted clever men like Clive, Hastings, and Nelson. In his insane egotism he considered it a personal insult that Chatham was given a public funeral. His bigotry was such that he dismissed a ministry that proposed to allow Catholic officers to

rise to the rank of colonel. Pious he might be, but his ministers found him untruthful and treacherous.

His political opinions were moulded by the Tory Earl of Bute, and his political text-book was supposed to be Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*. The aim of both was to bring the Tories back to power; firstly, by persuading the king to favour the Tories instead of the Whigs; secondly, by destroying the usages that had crept into the constitution since 1688, which were represented as unlawfully and deliberately designed to perpetuate the Whig rule at the expense of a helpless sovereign. They so far succeeded that George's hatred of the Whigs became a mania. He determined to overturn their whole system; to frame his own policy, to make his ministers literally his subordinates, and to abolish cabinet rule.

His means were simple, even though they stultified all the best precepts in his text-book. He dispensed with ministers who were gifted, popular, and likely to oppose him, and preferred men of mediocre ability and docile behaviour. When he regained control of the Crown patronage, many politicians began to reconsider their views. Employing an unblushing corruption that made Walpole seem virtuous, he soon built up a party, known as King's Friends, from courtiers, Tories, and converted Whigs, who voted in the Commons according to royal command, and were sufficiently numerous to embarrass any ministry attempting independent action, until the king could conveniently dismiss it.

It is obvious that this policy represents a reaction against the political development of the preceding half-century. Had George been popular and more adroit, had his rule been less embarrassed and disastrous, he might have established the royal autocracy coveted by the Stuarts. But his popularity blossomed late; he was hampered by the American war; and when he had won the warm affection of his people, his mind and health

were breaking down, and the system of ministerial rule he spent his life in opposing was imposed upon him by sheer force of circumstances.

But if George partly failed in his intentions, he succeeded in ridding the country of the incubus of the Whig oligarchy with its claim to a sort of prescriptive right to exclude all but itself and its nominees from governing, to make the king a Venetian doge, and keep the nation perpetually in tutelage. Under George's system the Whig party broke up into quarrelling factions, which the king played off against one another, and it gradually declined before a united Tory party, purged of its Jacobitism and associating its royalist sentiments with the person and cause of a British born king.

Pitt was the first victim of the new system, even in the plenitude of his power. Bute worked hard to get his colleagues to desert him. He was not allowed to declare war on Spain, though he knew she was secretly preparing to join France, and he was forced to resign (1761). He was justified, inasmuch as war had to be made on Spain three months later (1762), but the continued success of the British fleets and armies, popularly attributed to Pitt, could not alter George's determination to have peace at any price, and the peace of Paris (1763) was made between Britain, France, and Spain.

The peace was roundly condemned in Britain. It gave her substantial gains, including Canada and Florida, and a few small islands in the West Indies. But it was reminiscent of the peace of Utrecht. France and Spain regained the most valuable of their lost colonies. Prussia was meanly deserted. The British negotiators were accused of corrupt dealing. If for no other reason, it was denounced in Britain because it was bought for political ends, and it was the price of Pitt's humiliation. Bute had to protect himself from the mob behind a gang of hired bruisers, and he was soon glad to escape into

political retirement—after prudently providing for his friends and relations and giving an earnest of corruption that made the possession of a Patriot King seem a costly luxury. He had accomplished his main purpose. He had broken the Whig ranks, turned out their placemen noble and base, and built up an effective party as an instrument of the king's further policy.

George III erected and demolished four ministries—that of Grenville (1763–65), of Rockingham (1765–66), of Pitt, now Earl of Chatham (1766–68), and that of Grafton (1768–1770)—before he found in Lord North a prime minister who was servile enough to allow him an absolutely free hand in governing, who would champion policies he himself had never planned, and who would accept colleagues whom he had never invited. They were years of political storm and public rioting, but through them there run three continuous movements, the Wilkes agitation, the quarrel with the American colonists, and the triumph of the king through sheer obstinacy over demonstrations of popular hatred that surged even into his private closet.

In his paper—named the *North Briton*, as a jibe at Bute—John Wilkes, a London journalist and member of parliament, had joined in the outcry against the peace. He attributed the disgrace purely to ministerial responsibility, but George took the attack in No. 45 as giving him the lie personally, and through Grenville he commenced a reckless persecution of the editor. Under a general warrant, which named no names, Wilkes was arrested, together with his printers, and his rooms and private papers were ransacked.

When the matter was brought before the Courts of Justice, it brought about certain legal decisions that are considered of great importance in constitutional law. Pleading privilege of parliament, Wilkes obtained the decision that such privilege covers all cases except a

breach of the peace, and that libel is not a breach of the peace. He was therefore liberated. As for the mode of his arrest, General Warrants were declared illegal, and Wilkes and his colleagues obtained substantial damages for illegal arrest.

It was a signal humiliation for the king, who had engineered the whole affair, and it was all the more poignant, inasmuch as the Londoners signified their disapproval of the peace, the king's mother, and Bute by tumultuously awarding Wilkes the honours of a popular hero.

Now, Wilkes was only a loose, debauched man-about-town. In his folly he had written a ribald parody on Pope's Essay on Man, which one of his boon companions in immorality, the hypocritical Earl of Sandwich, had seen. By tampering with Wilkes's printer, Sandwich obtained a copy, although it was for private circulation only, brought it before the House of Lords, and had it denounced as a breach of privilege, because it facetiously proclaimed itself to be annotated by the Bishop of Gloucester. The Commons took similar action in regard to No. 45, and Wilkes, wounded in a duel, expelled from the Commons, and outlawed, fled to France, to return in 1768 to expiate his fictitious offence by imprisonment and fine.

Yet George still obstinately persisted in wrangling with a worthless demagogue. When Wilkes was elected for Middlesex, parliament voted his expulsion. When he was again returned by the Middlesex voters, parliament took the arbitrary course of declaring him incapable of sitting in parliament, and though Middlesex steadily gave him a majority at the poll, parliament declared his opponent duly elected.

The Whigs strongly supported Wilkes, asserting that it was a dangerous extension of parliamentary privilege to declare any one incapacitated from sitting in parlia-

ment, and that it was sheer tyranny to dictate to any constituency whom it should elect as its representative. Fortunately, time settled the matter in the interests of liberty when Wilkes took his seat unchallenged in 1774.

Wilkes had beaten the king by the aid of the people, who had rioted vigorously on his behalf. But his stormy career had raised other issues. Britain had at length perceived that the representative system was not only a sham but also a menace to liberty, and it was during the Wilkes agitation that the cry first arose for parliamentary reform. One of parliament's sources of independence, the secrecy of debate, disappeared in 1771, when certain printers were unsuccessfully prosecuted for reporting speeches; the exciting events of the reign and the writings of men like Junius, Burke, and Wilkes had already given the public an added interest in the doings of parliament; and with the growth of reporting in the many new journals that were being established, one important step had been taken to make parliament less independent of public opinion.

CHAPTER V

THE SECESSION OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES

GEORGE III suffered his second failure in his quarrel with the American colonists. These colonists, especially in the New England States, had inherited the stubborn spirit of independence of their Puritan forefathers. They were always impatient of outside interference; they struggled persistently to keep the executive powers of their governors and judges within the narrowest limits; and they were bitterly jealous of one another and always quarrelling.

Their independent spirit was stimulated by prosperity. Keen and energetic business men, favoured by the unique

resources of their land and climate, they had built up an expanding industrial system, a lucrative foreign trade, and a considerable mercantile marine. Their general level of education and intelligence was high; Franklin's experiments in electricity gave them a reputation for scientific discovery; and politically they were more advanced and less corrupt than their kinsmen at home.

In fact, the American colonies represented the greatest success in the colonising efforts of the modern world, and so sensible were the colonists themselves of the preponderating part their own efforts had played in this happy consummation that foreign observers early prophesied a disastrous ending to any attempt the motherland might make to tighten the reins of government or to profit by American prosperity in order to lighten the burden of her own necessities.

The negligent rule of the Whigs and the danger threatening from the French and Spanish colonies in America had kept the colonists loyal to Britain. But when the danger disappeared after the Peace of Paris, the captious spirit of the American lawyers and the violence of an active and unscrupulous press were allowed greater freedom to gain profit and advertisement by raising and exaggerating difficulties with the motherland. Grenville's Stamp Act (1765) gave them their great opportunity.

The primary source of trouble between America and Britain was economic, and was the outcome of the prevailing mercantilist system against which Adam Smith and the new economists were raising their voices, which among other things insisted that the main value of colonies to a mother country lay in the fact that they provided exclusive markets for her industrial products, and were mere fruitful aids to her commercial greatness. It followed that colonial interests were sacrificed for the advantage of the motherland.

To give a preference to British goods the American

trade was fettered by the Navigation Laws and heavy duties, and colonial manufactures that might compete with British products were smothered. True, America enjoyed bounties and monopolies on the export of raw material to Britain, but this advantage was more than counterbalanced by the prohibition of her most lucrative trade with the French West Indies. However, these theoretical checks upon trade broke down in practice, and a brisk smuggling trade went on which the lax Whig rule almost connived at, and the colonists murmured little against the duties actually collected, because they were light in comparison with the volume of trade, and there was no systematic attempt at any other form of taxation.

Now, Grenville tried to change these conditions. His Stamp Act ordained that newspapers and legal documents should bear a stamp purchased from the British officials. The colonists considered this an unjustifiable innovation. They agreed at first that Britain had a right to impose external taxes upon trade in order to regulate it according to Mercantilist ideas. But they denounced it as tyrannical to raise general taxation within the colonies, inasmuch as the colonists were not represented in the British parliament that authorised the taxation. But the true grievance, though one harder to formulate, lay in the very stringent measures Grenville took at the same time to crush the American smuggling trade in order to increase the revenue from the customs. To carry out fully the restrictions of the old colonial system was to deal a fatal blow at American commerce.

Grenville had much legal right on his side, and his policy had legitimate objects. He thought America ought to bear part of the enormous expenses incurred in the Seven Years' War, from which the colonists mainly benefited, and at the same time he wished to protect

the colonies from future foreign attacks by maintaining an army in America out of the funds provided by the increased revenue from the sale of stamps and the suppression of smuggling.

His fault was that he adopted his policy without asking the consent of the colonists, and so provided the grounds for a quarrel between them and Britain. He made the details of their relationship a matter of political controversy, and colonial matters were no longer discussed in the broad Imperial spirit of Chatham, but in the corroding atmosphere of partisan rancour. He gave an excuse to a noisy minority in America to put the colonials upon their mettle, to spur them to repudiate the last shred of the motherland's authority out of mere pride; while, by forcing Britain to defend her legal rights, he aroused British dignity and pugnacity, and made her quarrel when her interests and common sense dictated compromise.

The colonists strenuously resisted Grenville's measures by rioting, passive resistance, and a boycott of British trade, and the clamour and confusion caused both at home and in the colonies were such that when the Whigs came into power they repealed the Stamp Act in 1765, and contented themselves with a general declaration of Britain's right to tax her colonies.

Yet, after the repeal, there still remained a latent distrust and irritation among the colonists. And through the resistance of the Stamp Act they had now discovered a new sense of unity and a national spirit, and they had found leaders who began to voice an American patriotism, consisting in a defying of Britain upon every occasion. Some States revenged their grievances and kept agitation alive by gratuitously insulting British soldiers. Ill-feeling still simmered when Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Chatham's third and last administration, wantonly revived the whole quarrel by putting

revenue duties upon glass, lead and colours, paper and tea imported into America. Chatham himself was ill, and the "tessellated pavement" of a ministry that represented his ideal of non-party government had no consistent policy. He could not be blamed for this astounding reversal of Whig colonial policy. His ministry was dominated by the king, and soon resolved itself into a government of King's Friends, when first Chatham and then Grafton resigned, and Lord North became prime minister in 1770.

To George III opposition was rebellion, for which he knew no remedy but force. His vindictive temper demanded not only the defeat, but also the humiliation of his opponents. Reckless of consequences and blindly tenacious of his rights, he had advocated compulsion in colonial matters from the beginning. He was not to be intimidated by mob violence and the vituperation of partisan lawyers, and under his control British policy became less conciliatory, and the quarrel was more prolific in obstinacy and folly on both sides than in anything else. North was his catspaw, but he was sensible and tolerant, and he so far attempted to appease the angry colonists, that in 1770, to the king's chagrin, he removed all Townshend's duties except that upon tea, which he retained in order to help the bankrupt finances of the East India Company, but which he so readjusted that tea sold much cheaper in America than in Britain.

His attempt was vain. The agitators were encouraged by the fluctuation and hesitancy of British policy and the championship of their cause by the Whigs under Chatham and Burke. They had an example of forcible resistance in the Wilkes riots, and their own daring lawlessness culminated in the destruction of government property and the orgy of the Boston "Tea Party," when a party of colonists in Indian dress flung the first cargo of tea to enter Boston into the harbour in 1773.

Now, and on several subsequent occasions, a great statesman might have soothed the quarrel by courageous concessions and frank discussion. The majority of the Americans wanted neither war nor separation, and at the last moment they abandoned most of their alleged grievances. But matters were in a complicated state. In the homeland, the King's Friends clamoured for harsh measures and revenge, and answered the Boston outrage by closing Boston harbour, confiscating the Massachusetts charter and decreeing that offenders against the home government should be transported to England for trial, because American juries refused to convict. On the American side were men of the "Tea Party" kidney, needy politicians and blatant journalists, active in baiting soldiers, organising boycotts, and calling for a repudiation of debts owing to British merchants. Sober and sincere colonists were persuaded that Britain wished to enslave the colonies, and use American places and pensions merely to feed the corruption already rank in Britain. British Whigs sided with them, fearful that the success of the king's measures in the colonies would be but a prelude to a royal despotism at home. While the ordinary American resented interference in his private affairs, the ordinary Briton began to think that all Americans were selfish, peevish, litigious, disorderly rebels. Over all was Chatham, eloquent, but irresolute and dying, admiring the old British instincts of liberty in the colonies, sympathising with their claims, and denouncing their methods, foreseeing the danger of foreign interference in the event of war, and dreading the dissolution of the empire he had created. To such a pickle had the Patriot King brought his subjects—and the only issue proved fratricidal strife and perpetual separation.

In 1774 a Congress of the American colonies met at Philadelphia, demonstrating the tangible, if imperfect,

union of the colonies. A skirmish at Lexington in 1775 between regulars and colonial militia opened the war. In 1776 Congress declared the independence of the American colonies.

The American war taught nothing new in military strategy. The numbers of troops engaged were sometimes large in the aggregate, but they were scattered over large areas, and in comparison with European campaigns, the American operations rarely amounted to more than guerilla warfare and destructive raids. They produced no great military genius. Washington towers high amidst his contemporaries as a monument of patience, integrity, and patriotic devotion. Constant in misfortune, loyal to his cause, generous to his enemies, tactful and calm in the face of quarrels, jealousies, treachery, and mutiny, he was the gentleman and hero of the century. He fought his way to success over obstacles constructed mainly by those he served. But he was frequently beaten in battle, and his extreme caution sometimes appears like dilatoriness, timidity, and neglect of opportunity.

The British commanders were honest, commonplace, hard fighters, generally successful at the beginning of the war. In 1775 they beat the colonists at Lexington and Bunker's Hill. In 1776, while the American invasion of Canada ended in disaster, Howe captured New York, and Cornwallis swept New Jersey. Washington revived the American cause with small successes, but in 1777 he was defeated at Brandywine and Germanstown.

But nothing was more eloquent of the degeneration of the British services since Pitt left office than the want of vigour and promptitude shown by the British generals. Still, their task of subduing America was harder than it appeared. They had to fight over enormous distances, where it was almost impossible to maintain communications, and problems of victualling kept the armies to the

coast line. The British were fighting not a homogeneous state, but a loose confederation, a political body with no nerve centre to be paralysed by a decisive blow. No sooner was one state overthrown than another was in arms. The only side to feel the effects of a defeat in battle was the British. To secure their conquests the British generals needed larger forces than the king could supply. British recruiting was so poor that the king had to recruit in Germany and enrol Indians as allies, expedients that further embittered the war and furnished their own comment upon the king's fitness to rule an empire.

Concerted action between the British generals in America was hindered by difficulties of country and a want of cordiality between commanders. When a comprehensive plan had been matured, it showed none of the careful preparation that ensured the success of Pitt's conquest of Canada, and it ended in a catastrophe. In 1777 Burgoyne, advancing from Canada, occupied Ticonderoga, and marched thence to join Clinton at New York. He became isolated in rough country, and was harassed incessantly by increasing hostile forces, until he was forced to surrender with his entire army at Saratoga.

Saratoga gave a much needed fillip to the American cause. It was by no means a popular cause amongst the colonists, the majority of whom were either indifferent or frankly hostile to the revolutionary party. Large numbers of colonial loyalists welcomed the British armies, and served in their ranks, or made war on their fellow colonists of their own initiative. Trade was dislocated, and British privateers destroyed American shipping. A scarcity of hard cash and an indiscriminate issue of paper money disorganised the American monetary system, sent up prices, impoverished creditors and enriched debtors, and promoted fraud and illicit specula-

tion that cast suspicion upon the disinterestedness of the war party.

The war party was not united. Congress had no legal standing, and the local assemblies flouted its measures and gave it small and grudging financial support, and they often embarrassed its action by outbidding it to obtain recruits and loans for their own particular purposes. Nor were the Americans unduly enamoured of military glory. They were brave and capable fighters in irregular warfare, but incredibly insubordinate, critical of their leaders, sticklers for their rights, constantly deserting. Their armies were ill-paid and badly equipped. Left to itself, the cause of independence would have perished of its own defects.

Saratoga did not improve the tone and effectiveness of the American forces, which were to the end the despair of Washington. The same year Washington with difficulty kept together a mere shadow of an army in Valley Forge suffering the last degrees of dilapidation and neglect. But it encouraged foreign intervention in the struggle, and forced Britain to leave American affairs to look after themselves. In 1778 France and Spain, who had secretly helped the Americans since 1776, openly allied themselves with them.

France was eager to avenge the disgraces of the Seven Years' War, and spent money lavishly in providing ships and men and supplies for the colonists. Spain aimed at the capture of Gibraltar. In 1780 Russia, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland formed a League of Armed Neutrality to protect themselves against the arbitrary manner in which Britain searched neutral vessels for contraband cargoes for America. And while Britain was thus isolated in Europe, Ireland was almost in insurrection, and British dominion in India seemed about to be destroyed by Hyder Ali, a native prince of real ability and vigour.

But her difficulties served to arouse in Britain the patriotic spirit the squabble with the colonists had failed to evoke. The British generals in America at length showed energy and enterprise, and between 1779 and 1780 they beat the French and Americans on several occasions. Ireland was conciliated by the grant of what was practically legislative independence, and in India Warren Hastings held his own against Hyder Ali until, with the aid of the veteran Eyre Coote, he finally overthrew him at Porto Novo (1771).

On sea, however, supremacy passed to the combined fleets of France and Spain, and this decided the war against Britain. For a time French warships sailed the Channel unchallenged, and several of the islands of the British West Indies were captured. The situation was just the reverse of what it was in Chatham's day. France could land reinforcements in America, while the British forces were isolated and outnumbered. In 1781 Cornwallis had successfully harassed Virginia and occupied Yorktown, which, being accessible to the sea, would have kept him in touch with the other forces had he been supported by a fleet. But Admiral Rodney, who had already revived the British maritime reputation by defeating the Spaniards, was eluded in the West Indies by the French Admiral de Grasse, who now blockaded Yorktown, while 16,000 French and Americans invested it by land. Cornwallis was forced to surrender, and Britain's last chances in America disappeared.

Although North resigned, and the Whigs returned to power under Rockingham, the war went on. But it was a war against European enemies. Here Britain was more fortunate, for Rodney defeated the French in a great battle off Dominica (1782), and a combined attack upon Gibraltar by France and Spain was gallantly repelled. But the main object of the war, the independence of America, was now certain. France was approach-

ing bankruptcy, and Spain had no hopes of regaining Gibraltar. In 1783 the treaties of Paris and Versailles put an end to hostilities.

The terms of the peace show how humiliating were the results of George's government. The empire built up by Chatham was mutilated by the loss of America, and the cession of smaller possessions like Tobago and Senegal to France, and Minorca and Florida to Spain. The Americans did not succeed in detaching Canada from Britain, but otherwise they got almost all they asked and more than they were entitled to. The only bright spots in the sight of despondent Britons were the coolness that developed between the French and the Americans, and the disposition of the Americans to bury their grudges against the British.

Many writers assert that America was bound to separate from Britain in course of time, since it was too large and wealthy to remain a subordinate part of an empire. The pity was that the separation was effected under such unhappy circumstances. But probably no other method was possible so long as the conceptions of the relationships that ought to exist between the colonies and the mother country were what they were. It was a result of the American war that Britain slowly changed her ideas in this respect. For one thing, the fear that American independence would mean the ruin of British trade was dispelled by the fact that British trade with America continually increased. And again, when the younger Pitt conferred self-government upon Canada in 1791, the declaration of Fox upon that occasion that the only method of retaining distant colonies with advantage was to enable them to govern themselves, showed that British statesmen had learnt a lesson from the American war, and that they were beginning to revise their ideas of a true imperial policy.

CHAPTER VI

PITT AND THE FRENCH WARS

THE unhappy result of his American policy led George into his last struggle to preserve his political independence. His great weapon of corruption was slightly blunted by Burke's Economical Reform of parliament (1782). But Rockingham died in the first year of his premiership; his successor Shelburne was universally distrusted; and Fox, the true leader of the Whigs, whom the king detested for his profligacy, his factiousness, and his unpatriotic conduct during the war, was soon driven from office. Then a sudden alliance of Fox and North, who had called one another the hardest names, imputed to one another the blackest political crimes, and possessed no common principle except hostility to the king, seemed to upset all that George had laboured for from the beginning. He was enslaved by a parliamentary majority.

He freed himself by an act as unscrupulous as theirs. He let it be known in the Lords that those who voted for Fox's India Bill would be considered the king's enemies, and when the Bill was thus defeated he turned out the ministers, although they still had a large majority in the Commons.

Pitt, the son of Chatham, who was only twenty-five years of age, was the only one who dared to form a ministry in the face of the Coalition's majority, but in the general election (1784) the country, disgusted with Fox and North, who had sunk their principles to gain a political advantage, sent him back to power amidst great enthusiasm. The king and Pitt leaped into popularity together.

A great resemblance may be detected between Pitt and his illustrious father. He had his father's courage and optimism, his frigid dignity, some of his egotism, all of his self-confidence. His personal integrity was as flawless, and it was he who permanently removed the more flagrant methods of corruption from political life. He had Chatham's love of power, but he never grovelled before royalty. He was respectful and faithful to George, but he refused to imitate North and have his policy dictated to him. Indeed, he had the king in his power so long as there was no alternative to him except the detested Fox; and since he was as arrogant as his father towards his colleagues, he quickly restored something of the cabinet rule as it existed under the first two Georges. George III did not find this intolerable, for his confidence in Pitt steadily increased, and Pitt had saved him from the Whigs. But Pitt had really carried British constitutional development one step further than Wilkes and the journalists. He had delivered George not by emulating that monarch's unconstitutional and shady policy, but, so far as it was possible under an obsolete representative system, by making public opinion a political force.

Chatham never claimed any skill or interest in finance. But his son's reputation in this respect was even greater than Walpole's. He was interested in the details as well as in the broader aspects of finance. He found confusion and waste in every branch of the fiscal system, an annual deficit on the budget, and the revenue depleted by systematic smuggling. By careful administration and the inauguration of a sound audit, he corrected the worst abuses and saved much money. He found the tariff system complex and costly, one article carrying perhaps nine or ten different duties. He reduced the duties, established single duties, and concentrated the issues of Customs and Excise in a Consolidated Fund.

He established Walpole's Excise Scheme without trouble, and likewise revived the Sinking Fund to pay off the Debt, putting a million aside annually for the purpose.

He was largely under the influence of Adam Smith's doctrines, and no longer believed with the Mercantilists that one State could only prosper at the expense of another. He tried, though unsuccessfully, to secure greater freedom of trade between Britain and Ireland in 1785, and in 1786 he negotiated a Commercial Treaty with France. Modern economists detect flaws in his principles, but so long as Britain was at peace his measures promised well, and his contemporaries hailed him with wonder and admiration.

In his general policy, although he came to be considered the leader of the Tories, Pitt followed as far as he could the Whig ideas he inherited from his father, and with which he entered public life. He lacked Chatham's quick warm sympathies and unerring prescience. Yet he did not share Burke's intransigent conservatism. He had comparatively advanced ideas on parliamentary reform. He was willing to remove Catholic disabilities. He sympathised with the efforts of the early revolutionists to introduce constitutional government into France. His India Bill (1784) improved the government of India. He extended representative government to Canada (1791). Unfortunately, he was an opportunist, and too ready to desert important measures in the face of opposition that menaced his supremacy. Thus, he dropped parliamentary reform, and broke his promise to emancipate the Irish Catholics because the king opposed the measures.

Unlike his father, Pitt was more successful as a peace minister. Yet half his ministerial career was spent in fighting the French Revolution which broke out in 1789. In common with his fellow-countrymen, Pitt regarded the early stages of the Revolution with approval. British

observers had predicted it; the grievances that provoked it were well known; and it was reassuring to hear that its authors only intended to imitate the "glorious" doings of 1688 in Britain.

But when reform rapidly degenerated into mob rule, political iconoclasm, massacre, and regicide, Burke, who, with his acute sense of the dangerous possibilities inherent in the smallest constitutional change, had reprobated the violent remedies of the revolutionists from the beginning, voiced an altered British opinion in his cry, "Flee from the French Revolution." Pitt shared the general uneasiness. Then the French, while protecting themselves against armed foreign intervention, found that their revolutionary mobs became conquering armies, and they turned defence into aggression. Nor were they content with mere conquest. They made their politics a religion and their campaigns a crusade, and wherever they conquered they abolished the old régime and tried to implant their own social and political ideas, while their secret agents conspired to promote revolution in every country, including Britain. Pitt was bound to oppose a movement that threatened the balance of power and the social stability of Europe.

He struggled hard to keep Britain out of war. But in 1792 the French were in the Netherlands, and they opened the Scheldt to navigation. This was an open defiance of Britain, who, for reasons of commerce and defence, had fought throughout the century to keep the Scheldt closed, and the French only anticipated Pitt by declaring war on Britain (1793).

The war spoilt all Pitt's reforms. His commercial treaty with France was dead. Instead of free trade, Ireland offered Britain insurrection. The Sinking Fund became an absurdity when the Debt increased by millions every year. Moreover, the nation had not yet adjusted itself to the disturbing effects of the industrial and agra-

rian changes of the century, and it seemed possible that the working classes might be carried away by the heady utterances of various revolutionary societies. In his anxiety to prevent this, Pitt's policy against agitators became one of coercion and persecution, and he spoke no longer of reform. In this he was supported by many Whigs, who joined his party under Burke's guidance, leaving the rest to strive impotently against a Tory supremacy that lasted nearly forty years.

The causes of this long supremacy are almost the same as those that served the Whigs so successfully under the first two Georges. By their extravagant eulogies of the Revolution, by their intimacy with the French leaders, and by their unpatriotic attitude towards British policy, the Whigs provoked against themselves the same national prejudices as were roused against the Tories by Jacobitism. By advocating political changes when the country thought the smallest change but the harbinger of a social cataclysm, they made the Tories the defenders of the constitution. While the Whigs were weak and divided, the Tories were united, and received their policy from a succession of able men like Castlereagh, Canning, and Huskisson. The king, the ruling classes, and the boroughmongers were for the Tories against the Whigs. The commercial classes had unbounded confidence in Pitt, and in many ways his war policy suited their interests. Even the poorer classes, who suffered bitterly from the war, grew enthusiastic over victories as glorious as those of Chatham's day.

Meanwhile, Pitt worked hard to make the war against France a success. His methods were the traditional ones employed by Britain in a continental war and differed little from Chatham's. But he had not his father's firm and comprehensive grasp of a war policy, and he does not appear to have supervised the actual execution of his plans with sufficient care.

Since the British armies were too small to carry out great continental campaigns, Pitt built up and subsidised great coalitions to do it instead. This was not the first occasion for Britain to be the paymaster of Europe, and none had been so lavish of continental subsidies as Chatham. But Pitt often paid for services never rendered, and while Chatham championed Frederick the Great, a general very much in earnest, Pitt had to rely upon monarchs notorious for their paltry, selfish, time-serving spirit, who accepted his money and subordinated his interests to theirs.

Nor was Pitt as fortunate as his father in his British generals. Except at sea, the war took long to produce its natural leaders; and when Pitt sent troops to defend Holland, there was no Prince Ferdinand to lead them, but only a royal duke, the Duke of York, who blundered as badly in 1794 as Cumberland had done in 1757 at Kloster Zeven. And it was not Pitt's fault that the French produced a brilliant succession of soldiers and war administrators; that their armies, filled with a revolutionary frenzy and an utterly reckless thirst for glory, evoked unconventional methods of attack, and routed armies that half sympathised with the enemy and still manœuvred according to the stiff dilatory tactics of a bygone generation.

His main fault was that he was slow to recognise that Britain had regained the maritime supremacy momentarily lost during the American war, and that her fleet was her most potent weapon against France. Much of the money he squandered abroad might well have been devoted to improving the methods of naval recruiting and ameliorating those hard conditions of life on board which caused the fleet to mutiny in 1797.

But on sea he was really well served. He was able to repeat the strategy of the Seven Years' War by making numerous colonial conquests from the French and Dutch,

including Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope. In the victory of the 1st of June, the battle of Cape St. Vincent, and the battle of Camperdown, Britain beat the French, the Spaniards, and the Dutch respectively; and from 1797 till 1799 her naval superiority enabled her to maintain the fight against France unsupported, although Napoleon was in Egypt, there was fighting in India, and Ireland was in insurrection.

Nelson's victory at the Nile settled Napoleon's eastern career. The Irish cause perished in the battle of Vinegar Hill (1798), and the French invasions of Ireland were a fiasco. In 1800 Pitt tried to settle the distracted country by the Act of Union that merged the Irish in the British parliament. But George marred the effect of the measure by refusing to allow Pitt to carry out that part of the bargain most important to Irishmen, the emancipation of the Catholics, and Irish agitation lived on.

The disagreement about the Catholic question saw Pitt out of office for the first time for eighteen years. But before this a second coalition had run its unsuccessful course. Formed in 1799, and opening its campaign against the Directory with brilliance, it fell to pieces under the attacks of Napoleon, who had now made himself First Consul and practical dictator of France. Soon Britain was alone, with some of her former allies supporting France against her. Russia revived the old expedient of an Armed Neutrality against her tyranny at sea, and Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden joined it. Nelson's victory at Copenhagen (1801) showed that she was still full of fight; but by land she was powerless to alter events, and in 1802, the peace of Amiens marked the end of her first fight with France. The strain under which she was labouring was shown by the fact that, although her position was unshaken and France made no concessions, she restored all her conquests, except the Spanish Trinidad and the Dutch Ceylon.

The Treaty of Amiens was made while Pitt was out of office. But it could be nothing but a truce while Napoleon's ambitions were still unsatisfied and Europe remained in the melting-pot. Neither side was loyal to the treaty, and in 1803 Britain declared war again, and in 1804 Pitt was back again in office.

The outstanding fact in the struggles between Britain and France was that France could never get to hand-grips with her opponent. Napoleon tried to correct this by his famous plan to invade Britain from Boulogne. Pitt met him with a third coalition. In 1805 Nelson's victory at Trafalgar closed the channel to the French, and Britain was never again in danger of invasion. But on the other hand, Napoleon rounded on the coalition, and inflicted a series of crushing defeats on the Austrians, the Prussians, and the Russians. He was master of the continent, and Britain was again alone in the war against a tyranny that now aspired to be world-wide.

Pitt died in 1806 of anxiety and disappointment. George was old and hovering on the brink of insanity. But Pitt's successors inherited his determination to make no terms with Napoleon. Their methods display little genius for war. Instead of helping Europe in its spasmodic struggles against France, the British ministries scattered their forces over the whole world, or, as in the case of the Walcheren Expedition (1809), they planned their European expeditions where they had little chance of being effective. Their lack of tact produced strained relations between Britain and America, which developed into war in 1812. Even when a great general like Wellington appeared, who could show them the true line of attack to follow against Napoleon, they gratuitously enhanced the difficulties of his task by their slow appreciation, niggardly support, and foolish interference. But they never relaxed in the conflict, and so long as Britain was unsubdued, Napoleon's position was insecure.

It was the necessity of finding some means of crushing her that drove Napoleon into schemes too exacting even for his genius. He thought he might ruin her through her commerce. In 1806 he issued his Berlin decrees, which forbade his subjects and allies to trade with Britain, and confiscated all British shipping and British goods in Continental ports, and all shipping touching at British ports. Britain retaliated with Orders in Council prohibiting neutral ships from trading with ports from which British shipping was excluded.

Now, Britain ruled the sea, and had snapped up all the available colonies of European powers that could be conquered by maritime expeditions; so that the Continent, with its trade ruined by war, depended upon British trade for the necessities of life. The British fleets could starve Europe more easily than Napoleon could ruin Britain. Soon prices on the Continent were so high that the common people, who had viewed the destruction of their old governments with equanimity, especially when the new régime sometimes brought them improved conditions, now felt Napoleon's rule unbearable. He had to suppress nations where he had previously only overthrown governments. Moreover, he had to connive at the infraction of his own Decrees to equip his armies. His allies in Holland, Sweden, and Russia refused to obey the Decrees, and to make his Continental system at all effective, he had to dominate the whole European seaboard and secure Spain and Portugal. It was when he tried to make his brother Joseph king of Spain in 1808 that he began his real combat with the nations, and, though he knew it not, gave Britain its proper cue.

In Britain's attempt to rescue Portugal and Spain, Wellington first appeared in European wars, although he had already distinguished himself in the Indian wars instigated by the French. With the victory of Vimiero

in 1808 he began the Peninsular War, which opened with campaigns designed to protect Portugal, but which developed into an attack upon the French in Spain, and ended in Wellington's chasing them across the Pyrenees, and in his fighting the battle of Toulouse in 1814 within the French frontier.

At first he had to face much opposition from the ministry at home, and he only kept himself in command by patience and success. He never had adequate supplies. The Spaniards were a hindrance as allies, though the Portuguese behaved better. His battles were soldiers' battles, and first showed Britain and the world what powers of dogged resistance and fierce attack the British private possessed. He revived the European reputation of the British army dormant since Marlborough's days.

Wellington's campaigns in Spain destroyed the vaunted invincibility of the French armies and heralded Napoleon's downfall. In 1812 the understanding between Russia and France gave place to war, and Napoleon was led to undertake his unhappy march to Moscow. It was the great disaster of his career, and gave his enemies fresh courage. Previous misfortunes had at last taught Europe the need for harmonious co-operation, and Napoleon was borne down by numbers, fighting gallantly. In 1814 he was banished to Elba. In less than a year he suddenly reappeared, to be finally defeated by Wellington and Blucher at Waterloo.

CHAPTER VII

REACTION AND REFORM

BRITAIN'S prolonged fight against the Revolution and Napoleon produced very mixed effects upon her social and political condition. Her reputation as a power of

international importance had declined after George III had dismissed Chatham and lost the American colonies. It was restored by Pitt's foreign policy and by Wellington's campaign in Spain and his crowning success at Waterloo. Wellington and Castlereagh were influential members of the Congress of Vienna that settled the affairs of Europe in 1815; her guarantee was regarded as a very necessary factor in giving that settlement stability; and it was her good word that shielded France from the greedy and revengeful temper of the reactionary monarchs of the continent.

The British people themselves acquired a new confidence in their own superior powers, and the history of their foreign policy showed that they were more easily stirred to interfere in European affairs than before, even when the matter did not directly concern Britain, and merely involved the championship of the principle of the right of autonomy for individual nations that they had learned to cherish in their own national struggle against a European tyrant.

But Britain never abandoned that policy of seeking commercial advantages in her international relationships that had marked her diplomacy throughout the eighteenth century. The triumph of her fleets and the destruction of the shipping of other nations during the wars had at least definitely ensured her supremacy at sea, and given her a monopoly of the carrying trade of the world. By the same means she had made numerous colonial conquests, which to some extent compensated for the loss of America and gave her the basis of a great empire. In the race for industrial supremacy she enjoyed a great handicap. Her inventions in themselves were an unspeakable advantage, and while continental manufactures were demoralised by the depredations and financial drainage of twenty-three years unremitting warfare, she was almost the universal provider of Europe, and

was free to develop and improve her industrial processes without hindrance. This success she endeavoured to prolong by following an individualistic foreign policy that would enhance her prestige in foreign markets.

Nevertheless, the wars caused a deal of evil. The humbler classes suffered unspeakable misery. The price of food was high because Britain's resources no longer sufficed to feed her population, and foreign supplies were stopped. Famine and food riots were not an uncommon feature of the eighteenth century, but during the war they were endemic. Even afterwards food prices were high, partly because time had to pass before the continental exporting countries could recuperate, partly because much land went out of agriculture after the war, partly because of bad crops, and partly because the Corn Laws, which worked to keep up prices artificially in the interest of agriculture, were made more stringent.

Nor had Napoleon's continental system been entirely without effect upon British industry, and though manufacture was often very brisk in spite of the war, trade fluctuated violently and unemployment was frequent. These conditions, too, were prolonged after peace was declared, inasmuch as manufacturers had not yet learned to gauge the state of the world's markets, and overproduction frequently caused stoppages of labour.

Moreover, it was really during the first quarter of the nineteenth century that the effects of the Industrial Revolution began to make themselves felt. The ever growing use of machinery spread ruin in the homes of the domestic workers, and the older fought a hopeless fight against poverty, while the younger painfully settled themselves to the new conditions—conditions so objectionable that they drove the workers to riotous and insensate attacks upon machinery and property, conspicuously in the Luddite riots (1811). Polite and

leisured Britain had to submit to periodical shocks as tales were unfolded before magistrates, committees, and commissioners of tiny children brutally tortured and worked to death, women employed under the most degrading conditions, and men toiling late into the night and driven to seek their only enjoyment in debauchery.

Not that the lot of the agricultural labourer was any better. He had been allowed no share of the prosperity during the war. He had to bear his full measure of the calamities that succeeded it. And his wages were kept low by the vicious poor law system that practically made the rates make up the living wage the farmer denied him.

Discontent was deep and widespread, both during the war and after. It was augmented by the grievances of Dissenters and Catholics trying to have their disabilities removed, and of wealthy merchants and manufacturers who denounced the financial administration of the country, resented the political superiority of the landed classes, and demanded enfranchisement. In addition, there was an ever growing band of philanthropists and social reformers, Whig, Radical, Socialist, and Tory, who sought the improvement of the conditions of labour generally.

The truth was that while British politicians had concentrated their attention upon the war, and had learnt to magnify the claims and virtues of the old social system, a social and economic revolution had stolen upon Britain unperceived, and the institutions and government of the country had not been developed to deal with it. The war had given the Tories a monopoly of power because the Whigs proved unpractical and unpopular with the voting classes. But the Tories were as helpless in peace. They still lived in the atmosphere of the French Revolution. Their finance wore the

marks of the reckless extravagance born of the wars. Their timidity saw in the slightest change the signal of a general catastrophe and the uprooting of the pillars of the constitution.

Even had they been disposed to alleviate the lot of the worker by State intervention, they were confused by the cry of the manufacturers that things should be left to right themselves. In 1802 Sir Robert Peel the elder passed the first Factory Act, which endeavoured to regulate the conditions of child labour; and improving Acts were passed in 1819 and 1825. But the operatives asked for the suppression of female labour and a ten hours day, and the manufacturers rose in alarm to prophesy the ruin of British industry.

The Tories were not really disposed to carry out all that was asked of them by agitators and philanthropists. George III was hopelessly insane, and his son ruled as regent until the king died in 1820. But his spirit and the political traditions of his age lingered, and the government answered agitation with coercion and persecution. For instance the "Blanketeers," artisans who set out from Manchester with sleeping blankets strapped on their backs to march to London to lay their grievances before the government, were imprisoned. An unarmed crowd demonstrating at Manchester in 1819 was attacked by Yeomanry, who were publicly thanked by the Regent and the ministry as though they were the heroes of Waterloo instead of "Peterloo."

By using these means the Tories simply drove the people into disorderly and seditious courses. In 1820 a plot to murder the ministers was concocted at Cato Street in London, and fights between troops and demonstrators were common.

However, a reaction set in against the policy of the Tory leaders, which split the ranks of the party. In 1822 Canning became foreign secretary, and with him

there came into the ministry a small band of Tories like Huskisson, whose views were far from being extreme, who set their faces against parliamentary reform and the emancipation of the Dissenters and Catholics, but whose ideas were liberal in comparison with those of Wellington and Sidmouth.

The change was noticeable in British foreign policy. Under Castlereagh, Canning's predecessor, the tendency had been to make Britain fall in with the policy of the European monarchs associated in the Holy Alliance, a policy which not only opposed reform but also aspired to re-erect in Europe the social system as it stood before the French Revolution. In particular it resisted the efforts of the smaller nations to gain autonomy. Canning, however, broke entirely with the Alliance. He countenanced an insurrection in Portugal, answered the intervention of the reactionary powers in Spain by recognising the autonomy of the revolting South American colonies, and vigorously championed the Greeks in their struggle for independence against Turkey.

A mild reforming spirit was discernible in domestic policy. Peel, as Home Secretary, pruned away the most barbaric sections of the Criminal Code. Huskisson used his influence to improve the government's financial methods, to lower many oppressive tariff duties, and to modify the Navigation Acts, which now harassed instead of benefited British trade. In 1827, when Canning became prime minister owing to the death of Lord Liverpool, he and Huskisson contemplated a reform of the Corn Laws. But Canning died in the first year of his office, and on his death the old-fashioned Tories, who hated Canning and his followers, attempted to revive the traditions of reactionary rule.

Yet times had changed. The Duke of Wellington, as head of the ministry, might be a political disciplinarian, and import his military methods into civil government,

Still, the parties with grievances had only been emboldened by Canning's concessions. Moreover, in his Catholic Association Daniel O'Connell had shown them how to concentrate popular agitation and give it united action in a perfectly constitutional manner, but with formidable effect. These were the days of great mass meetings, and for the Tories to meet them with nothing but blank uncompromising opposition was to invite revolution.

Even Wellington had to give way. For political agitation was surely solidifying around the demand for a drastic reform of parliament. Agitators with all manner of objects, some of them mutually destructive, were beginning to believe that all their desires would be consummated if only parliament were reformed and the franchise widened, and that such was the one way to success. Yet men of enlightened views and liberal sympathies like Canning and Huskisson opposed parliamentary reform. In Wellington's eyes it meant the end of all things. In words reminiscent of Burke he maintained that the representative system was above improvement. So, to retain the greater he sacrificed the less.

In 1828, when the Canningites voted with Lord John Russell and the Whigs for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, rather than risk defeat he acquiesced, and the Dissenters were relieved of what was rather a political stigma than a practical grievance. In 1829 O'Connell's agitation was ripe in Ireland, and his nominees were beginning to capture the parliamentary seats. Again Wellington compromised, and passed the Catholic Emancipation Bill despite the protests of his colleagues.

In 1830 George IV died. His brother, William IV, enjoyed a somewhat exaggerated reputation as a friend of reform, and the reformers increased their activities, full of expectation. In the same year the French again

rose in revolution and drove out Charles X, the second monarch of the restoration, in favour of the Citizen King, Louis Philippe, who, like William IV, was supposed to be a convinced supporter of popular institutions and liberal reforms. In the nineteenth century political movements in France and Britain reacted upon one another with remarkable force and sympathy, and the news of this July Revolution added fuel to the excitement among the British reformers. In the general election of 1830 the Whigs bribed and agitated so successfully that they could outvote Wellington with the help of the Canningites, and so Earl Grey formed a Whig ministry that put parliamentary reform in the front of its programme.

The agitation for some reform of the representative system was now nearly seventy years old. It will be remembered that it had its origin in the Wilkes agitation, and the desire of the baffled Whigs to destroy the new system of George III. So long as a corrupt parliament had worked to their own advantage they were content to retain it unchanged. But when George showed how it could be used for their discomfiture, they began to analyse its deficiencies and clamour for its reform.

Although they were agreed that parliament ought to be, but was not, a "mirror of the nation," they were not unanimous in recommending any special plan of alteration, and the proposals actually put forward show how circumscribed their outlook was, and what a slight claim they really had to be regarded as a popular party.

Chatham wanted to increase the number of county members, because they were elected on a wider franchise than the usual borough members, but he set his face against the excision of the root of the evil, the decayed boroughs, which were now regarded as private property.

Burke "screamed with passion" at any suggestion

to change the representative system. He denounced it as "a representation chosen chiefly by the Treasury and a few thousands of the dregs of the people who are paid for their votes," and yet swore that "parliament was, and always had been, precisely what it ought to be." He thought it was sufficient to cut away the means of corruption and unfair royal influence. Thus, in 1782, he carried his "Plan for the Better Security of the Independence of Parliament and the Economical Reform of the Civil and other Establishments." By this he reduced the pension list, abolished a few of the more outrageous sinecures, excluded contractors from the House, and disfranchised revenue officers, but generally did less than he intended, because the king plotted hard to thwart him.

Apartfrom a few visionaries like the Duke of Richmond, who wanted universal suffrage and annual parliaments, the most advanced reformer in parliament was the younger Pitt. In 1782 he moved for an inquiry into the state of the country's representation, and made the speech which goaded Burke into his remarkable eulogy of the threatened parliament. In 1785, as prime minister, he actually propounded a scheme of reform. He suggested that a certain number of rotten boroughs should be disfranchised and their owners compensated from a grant of a million pounds. A sum of money was to be set aside annually to form a permanent compensation fund, from which other boroughs could be bought up as opportunity arose. The seats thus freed were to be given to the counties and large towns hitherto insufficiently or not represented. But the king and the House would not listen to such proposals, and the rotten boroughs were saved. For no plan of reform would be accepted during the French wars.

The plan laid before parliament by Lord John Russell in 1831 was far more drastic than any hitherto pro-

pounded by a responsible minister. Rotten boroughs were to be disfranchised immediately and without compensation, and the parliamentary seats were to be redistributed in a rough proportion between the counties and the greater and lesser towns. The voting disqualification, which had varied considerably from borough to borough, was made uniform, all who occupied a house of ten pounds a year rateable value having a vote in the borough, and copyholders, leaseholders, and freeholders—in the Bill as it passed, fifth-pound tenants at will were added—having a vote in the county. To minimise the opportunities of corruption and disorder during an election, the polling time was reduced from fifteen days to two days in the counties, and to one in the boroughs. Scotland and Ireland were dealt with in practically the same manner as England and Wales.

Such a Bill was a tremendous innovation at the time, and its promoters expected a trying struggle before they could pass it through parliament. The extreme Tories fought it with every device of parliamentary opposition. The Radicals offered a but uncertain support to a Bill they considered inadequate and undemocratic. Three times the Bill came before parliament amidst intense excitement. The first Bill, introduced in March 1831, passed its second reading by a majority of one, and broke down in committee. A General Election followed, and the Bill went to the Lords with a majority of 136, and was promptly rejected. A third Bill went to the Lords in March 1832. It would have been rejected if the Tories could have formed a ministry. Wellington tried and failed. The country was on the very brink of revolution, and the Whigs were urging the reluctant king to a wholesale creation of peers. Wellington saved the situation by withdrawing sufficient Tory peers to leave the Whigs in a majority, and in June 1832 the Reform Bill passed.

The Reform Bill was in itself a revolution, but a revolution comparable to that of 1688, for there was much of compromise about it, and, apart from sporadic rioting, it was accomplished peaceably. The latter revolution handed power from the Crown to an oligarchy claiming an exclusive right to monopolise the functions of government. The former gave it to the middle classes in whose name and in accordance with whose caprices the national policy had to be determined. The landed classes retained much of their old monopoly because of their wealth, influence, and experience. The men who afterwards succeeded to power, whether Whig or Tory, still governed largely according to the old-fashioned régime in which their ideas had been stereotyped. The opponents of the Reform Bill soon found that it did not produce all the evils they sincerely anticipated. Still, the fact remained that the old aristocratic governing class had lost its power and had to share political control with manufacturers, professional men, small masters, and shopkeepers. The change was to be seen in the changed appearance, composition, behaviour, and oratorical style of the Commons, the frequency of political crises, the attempts the defeated Tories made to retain the direction of affairs through the Lords, which now came into conflict with the Commons more frequently than before, in the tendency for the Cabinet to seek stability by tightening the bonds of discipline within its own little circle and over the party it represented, in the care with which parties tried to win popular opinion for their measures, in the increased delicacy with which parliament responded to fluctuations of opinion outside its walls.

But like the Revolution of 1688, the Revolution of 1832 was followed by a transitional phase. Once the Bill was secured the conglomeration of forces that had combined to procure it resolved itself into its component

parts. While the official Whigs continued in the spirit of the early leaders of the French Revolution to attack aristocratic privileges and establishments, Whig manufacturers demanded advantages for themselves in the shape of the abolition of the tariff system in order to cheapen the cost of production. Both looked askance on the demands of the artisans for improved conditions of life and labour.

Indeed, the Reform Bill grew more hateful to the workers than to the Tories. The benefits that were to flow immediately from parliamentary reform never came. Famine, disease, poverty, long working hours remained. Those whom they had helped into power they began to regard as their natural enemies. Measures of relief offered them by the Whig masters they viewed with hostility and distrust. They boycotted the Commissioners upon whose report the Factory Act of 1833 was based. The factory inspectors appointed to see that the workers, especially the children, received the benefit of the Act, were denounced by the agitators Oastler and Bull, as Spanish inquisitors. The anger and suspicion of the workers were intensified by the harsh operation of the new Poor Law passed by the Whigs in 1834.

Thus not only had the Whigs to face the opposition of the Tories, the Court, and the Lords, but they were divided among themselves and embarrassed by their former allies, and they had been out of office so long that they had to learn the lesson of governing from the beginning. Consequently their rule was never strong.

But they had remarkable men in their ranks, and they could count upon the momentum of the reform movement to enable them to carry their policy to great lengths. They abolished slavery in the British Empire in 1833; they broke down the East India Company's monopoly of trade with India; and in 1835 they rounded off their political reforms by their Municipal Corporation Reform

Act, which remodelled all the municipalities upon a uniform plan, abolished the close, corrupt, and inefficient corporations, and threw open municipal government to all citizens who possessed property qualifications closely resembling the parliamentary qualification. All this was done in a few years, in addition to the passing of smaller Acts like the General Registration Act and the Civil Marriages Act and the establishing of an Ecclesiastical Commission to overhaul the administration of the Church.

But the old party lines of division were being blotted out and new political shibboleths were being introduced, and the political world was going through a metamorphosis. The very names of the parties changed when Peel abandoned the designation "Tory" for "Conservative," and both parties put forward fresh schemes of innovation that challenged every preconception of the eighteenth century, and when Victoria succeeded William IV in 1837, she gave her name to an epoch and a new era.

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